

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 276 218

EC 190 984

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TITLE An Invitation to Play. Teacher's Guide and Parent Booklet.
INSTITUTION Wisconsin State Dept. of Public Instruction, Madison. Div. for Handicapped Children and Pupil Services.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (ED), Washington, DC.
REPORT NO WDPI-Bull-6070; WDPI-Bull-7044
PUB DATE Aug 86
NOTE 14lp.; Wisconsin State Early Childhood: Exceptional Education Needs Project. Photographs will not reproduce well.
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Child Development; *Disabilities; Early Childhood Education; Information Sources; Learning Activities; *Parent Child Relationship; *Parent Education; *Play; *Recreational Activities; *Workshops; Young Children

ABSTRACT

The teacher's guide and parent booklet on play are both intended to provide encouragement and ideas for parents of young handicapped children. The teacher's guide stresses the importance of positive parent-child interactions, addresses specific problems of some children (such as lack of mobility or perseveration) during play, and offers suggestions for guiding children through play experiences. An initial section provides background information on play including social stages and cognitive levels of play, play and the handicapped child, enhancing play for children with specific handicapping conditions, observing children at play, and adult involvement in child's play. Specific guidelines for planning and conducting a play workshop for parents include a workshop planning checklist, a sample invitation, suggested workshop displays and activities, workshop discussion questions, and suggested handouts. The last section offers recommendations for maintaining interest in play throughout the year. Eighteen supplemental activity sheets give suggestions for such activities as "dressing up," using "throw-aways" for play, and exploring the outdoors. Sample newsletters and monthly calendars with play ideas are also included. A list of about 90 resources for parents and teachers is appended. The parent booklet, illustrated with photographs, provides 20 one-page suggestions for play activities with handicapped children. Activities include make believe with boxes, kitchen play, blowing bubbles, and sand play. Resources for parents and teachers fill seven pages; a two-page bibliograophy is also provided. (DB)

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1 of 2

AN INVITATION TO PLAY



TEACHER'S GUIDE

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Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction / Herbert J. Grover, State Superintendent

An Invitation to Play: Teacher's Guide

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August 1986

EC190984

Acknowledgments

A special thanks is expressed to the following EC:EEN teachers for their valuable input in developing the activity sheets:

Madge Bishop
Stevens Point School District

Sara Holzman
CESA #5

Regina Brayer
Baraboo School District

Rita Wagner
Menomonee Falls School District

We would also like to gratefully acknowledge the following people:

Editing	Jenny Lange, Jim McCoy
Cover design	Jill Howman
Illustrations*	Jill Howman
Typing	Holly Dunagan

*Illustrations by Irene Trivas on pages 50, 62-64, 66, and 74-75 are reprinted with permission from Harper Colophone Books, Harper and Row Publishing Company, New York.

This supplemental guide to the parent booklet, An Invitation To Play, was developed through a state implementation grant from the United States Department of Education (USOE), Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS). The opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the USOE/OSERS, and no official endorsement by the USOE shall be inferred.

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Forward

After we developed the parent booklet, An Invitation To Play, we wondered if some parents of handicapped children might need extra encouragement and direction in helping their child play. As a result, we have developed this teacher's guide to further promote quality play experiences in and around the home. The guide features suggestions for introducing the parent booklet and additional activities to maintain interest in the book and in the general topic of play.

As teachers of Early Childhood: Exceptional Educational Needs (EC:EEN) programs, we spend a good deal of time helping parents become more effective teachers. However, we also want to emphasize the importance of positive parent-child interactions; therefore, we are going on the record as not only granting permission to play, but heartily encouraging parents to provide the opportunities for play experiences. We realize that many handicapped children need assistance to effectively play: some lack mobility, some irritate their peers, some persevere, some can't figure out where to begin. The information included in this guide addresses these problems and offers suggestions for guiding children through play experiences.

We strongly believe that handicapped children, just like their non-handicapped peers, use play to unlock the universe and rehearse for life's roles. We believe that all children - indeed, all of us - need time to play.

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I.

Introducing The Subject of Play

Play provides parents and children with a natural opportunity to experience positive interactions. The parent booklet, An Invitation To Play, was developed to provide parents with a variety of ideas for these valuable play experiences.

We suggest that you review the subject of play and its importance prior to distributing the parent booklet. While the importance of play has been highlighted in many parent magazines and books, there are still some caregivers who are unaware of the significance of play in their child's development.

This chapter provides information to review and share, ideas for planning a group workshop, suggested workshop activities, and handouts related to play. These will assist you in introducing the parent booklet and in providing a basis for discussion related to the individual concerns or needs of each parent and child. These activities and handouts may be used during home visits or group workshops.



A. Information to Review

This section provides background information on the subject of play. While it was developed for the teacher, much of the information may be appropriate for parents to further enhance their understanding of play.

Consider each parent's different interests, needs, and concerns, then decide how to best utilize this information. You may want to share this information through handouts or incorporate it into your workshop discussions.

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What is Play?

Play, as many authors have described, is "a window to whatever is on the child's mind . . ."

Timmy playfully offers a cracker to his mother. When she opens her mouth in an exaggerated manner to claim the food, he squeals with delight. Timmy withdraws his offer and takes a bite of the cracker himself. He offers the food once again, and the game continues until the cracker is all gone.

Marcus is diligently rolling the clay into a long, thin cylinder. He gently brings the ends together and places them inside the circle of clay. As he is finishing up, his sister signs, "Who is that?" as she points to the face with the big mouth. Marcus smiles mischievously and signs back, "That's you!"

Maria is "playing waitress." After taking orders, she pulls some dishes from the sack attached to her wheelchair. Her friends "eat" the make-believe food while she scratches on a pad of paper. Maria hands the children the check. "What's this?" Billy asks. Maria explains, "That says Cindy gets to pay me two dollars and you gotta pay me a hundred dollars."

Mrs. Brown puts the Sesame Street Album on after snack. As soon as Mindy hears the music, she stands up on her tiptoes, stretches her arms up as far as she can and shouts, "Big Bird!" She flaps her arms up and down in time to the music as several of her friends join in the fun.

The play activities of the handicapped children described above show that play is many things - an interweaving of mind, body, people, and objects. These examples also help us appreciate the joy, spontaneity, and humor of children's play. However, as educators trying to understand and facilitate a child's development, we often need to break down play into its various components. Many theorists and researchers have proposed a variety of categories and/or stages as a way of organizing and understanding the relationship between play and development. It would appear that no single theory can adequately explain the vast range of play behaviors or the many functions that play fulfills, but together they shed some light on a very complex subject. Therefore, we are including a few of these classification systems on the next two pages for your review.

Social Stages of Play

As mentioned by A. Widerstrom (1983)*, the best known and most widely used categorical system for social play is probably that of Parten (1932). The six categories of play she identified are presented below in summarized form.

Unoccupied Behavior

Child engages in random behavior such as watching something momentarily; touching, mouthing, or looking at objects but not really playing; following an adult; or engaging in play limited to child's own body.

Onlooker

Child spends most of the time observing others from the "sidelines," often talks to other children or shows interest in the activities, but doesn't actually enter into play.

Solitary Independent Play

Child plays alone with toys different from those used by children within speaking distance and makes no effort to get close to other children.

Parallel Activity

Child plays independently, but the child is beside rather than with other children; uses toys similar to those of children nearby.

Associative Play

Child plays with other children in a common activity, forming a group that excludes other children. Each child does as he/she chooses, engaging in similar or even identical activity. There is no division of labor.

Cooperative or Organized Play

Child plays in a group organized for some play purpose (product, drama, competitive games). Labor is divided and each child takes on a different role. One or two children usually dominate, becoming leaders, and excluding some children from the group.

*Widerstrom, A. "How Important is Play for Handicapped Children?" Childhood Education, September/October 1983.

Cognitive Levels of Play

Piaget (1963) regarded play as a critical component in the development of cognitive skills. He classified three general developmental levels of play which are present below in summarized form.

Practice Play

Accompanies the sensorimotor stage of development. It usually consists of repeating various learned behaviors, apparently to provide pleasure and not to attain a specific goal.

Symbolic Play

Parallels Piaget's preoperational stage of development. The child's ability to use mental symbols to represent experience increases; pretend or make-believe play begins. The child's increased language skills allow him/her to imitate and recall past experiences.

Games with Rules

Parallels the concrete operational stage; requires the ability to accept prearranged rules and adjust to them, and to control actions and reactions within the given limits. This stage involves cooperative and competitive activities.

Educators seeking more information on research linking play to development are encouraged to review the following sources.

Mori, A., et. al., eds. Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, Play and Development, 2 (October 1982).

Pelz, Ruth, ed. Developmental and Clinical Aspects of Young Children's Play. WESTAR Series paper, #17, ERIC #ED228796, 1982.

Sponseller, Doris. "Play and Early Education." In Handbook of Research in Early Childhood Education. Edited by Bernard Spodek. New York: The Free Press, A Division of Macmillan Publishing, Inc., 1981.

Precursors to Play

During the first six to eight weeks of life the infant's movements are inhibited by reflexes. Although not yet refined, vision and hearing are present. Therefore, as forerunners to "play" consider the following recommendations when selecting or making auditory and visual targets for a new infant.

The most appealing visual and auditory target for a new infant is a human being. Even if we disregard the strong emotional bond, a baby's caregiver is an active auditory and visual stimulus and cannot be matched by any of the "razzle-dazzle" infants toys on the market today.

In addition to the human face, infants seem to prefer curved forms and things that move, as well as black and white patterns, during the first eight weeks of life. Researchers who have studied infants suggest black and white photographs of parents' faces, "bull's-eyes" painted on white balls, black and white stripes on paper plates, and checkerboard print or newspaper mounted on discs as visual targets. Initially, any of these two-dimensional objects could be suspended within the infant's preferred visual field, which is approximately seven or eight inches away from his/her face.

In response to auditory stimuli, infants prefer the human voice as well as soft, high-pitched sounds such as gold Hindu bells, wind-up musical toys or music boxes, and squeeze toys which produce a soft or breathy "whoosh" sound.

In their absence, tape recordings of the parent's voices(s) may be used by a substitute caregiver. Soothing tunes such as lullabies which provide a clear, rhythmical structure are particularly suitable.

During the third and fourth month of life a preference for novel, unfamiliar objects begins and continues as the child grows. An interest in colorful three-dimensional and sound-producing objects becomes apparent as the baby gains control over his/her actions on objects. During this period, "safe" objects suspended within the baby's batting range would be appropriate.

As the infant gains control over his/her movements, the best play-things encourage participation, such as a mobile to hit, noisemakers to bang, or a rattle to shake. Playing with these objects gives infants a sense of competency because they make something happen.

Play Behaviors

Initially, children are dependent upon their parent(s) for the stimulation and reciprocal play they thrive upon. After children have gained control over their own movements, and their parental attachments feel secure, they feel safe in exploring unfamiliar objects. As language develops, and connections to others outside of the family are possible, independence begins to emerge. While a great deal of individual play occurs first, children become increasingly social and creative in their play.

With this in mind, we have arranged the play behaviors into four clusters according to stages of development:

Age of Dependence

Age of Exploring

Age of Emerging Independence

Age of Independence

Since personal preference, available toys and materials, and the attitude and response of the adults in the environment has an effect upon the type and frequency of a child's play, the onset of these behaviors may vary.

Play Behaviors, continued

Age of Dependence

1. Playfully explores fingers/hand, places in mouth.
2. Places rattle or small toy, which has been positioned in the child's hand by parent, into mouth.
3. Reaches and attains toy with crude grasp.
4. Smiles when tickled or stimulated by caregiver.
5. Waves or shakes object or toys in the air.
6. If parent playfully imitates something the child has just done, the child will repeat the action or sound.
7. Responds to the entrance of parent by kicking legs or vocalizing.
8. Vocalizes to initiate and maintain playful interaction with caregiver.
9. Claps or hits two objects or toys together.
10. Inspects toys by looking at them and also by turning and twisting them in his/her hands.
11. Leans forward to search for dropped toy.
12. Will crumple or tear paper and pull on other objects.
13. Bangs a musical toy.
14. Enjoys simple imitation games with parent, like Patty-Cake, Peek-A-Boo, So Big, or other games.
15. Plays game of dropping toy and indicates to parent that he/she should get it.
16. Likes to put things in containers and dump them out again, e.g., puts blocks or clothespins in a bucket and then empties them out again or scoops up sand or water, then dumps and starts again.
17. Retrieves toy seen hidden by parent in playful game of hide-and-seek with toys.
18. Demonstrates he/she knows what to do with some common objects and toys (pretends to drink from cup, puts hat up to head, etc.
19. Offer a preferred toy to an older child or adult, but does not give up the toy.
20. Playfully combines two objects that go together in functional relationships (i.e., places spoon in cup.)

Play Behaviors, continued

Age of Dependence, continued

21. Will push/roll ball to parent with help.
22. Plays with lots of different toys; does not stick with one thing for more than a few minutes.
23. "Gets into everything" - - anything he/she can see and reach he/she wants to play with.
24. Looks at a picture book while sitting on parent's lap; may turn several pages at a time.
25. Uses whole arm movement in scribbling with markers or colors.
26. Undresses a doll.
27. May treat a new child as an object of curiosity rather than a person, poking, pulling, and prodding in an exploratory fashion.
28. Playfully imitates familiar animal sounds, barking like a dog, meowing like a kitty.
29. Enjoys watching other children play, but may be more interested in the toys than the children.
30. Comes to parent for help with toy.
31. Flings a ball overhead.
32. Pretends that one object is another in play, e.g., pushes a box-like car while making a "whoom" sound.
33. Likes to sit inside a box and be pushed or put doll or stuffed animal inside the box with him/her.
34. Turns knobs on toys.
35. Plays alone contentedly if near adults.
36. Bounces and sways to preferred music.

Play Behaviors, continued

Age of Exploring

1. Plays with sand and water using containers to pour, fill, etc., for a longer period of time.
2. Hoards toys - does not share well.
3. Plays a pretend activity with a doll in a sequence (e.g., feeds and puts to bed).
4. Likes to look at new photographs of self and refers to self by name.
5. Begins to explore new toys or materials without first asking for help, e.g., he/she has an idea of how to make new toys or materials work.
6. Plays next to brothers, sisters, or a few friends without many disturbances.
7. Will change activities many times during the day.
8. Follows around house and copies domestic activities in simultaneous play, sweep floor with small broom, stirs with spoon and bowl, etc.
9. May initially object to fingerpainting, but enjoys it after few trials.
10. Enjoys simple repetitious stories like "Goodnight Moon."
11. Likes to pound, squeeze, poke clay or dough.
12. May try to acquire possessions of others; grabs toys from peers.
13. Throws a ball overhand.
14. Waves a bubble-wand through the air to make bubbles.
15. Enjoys playing "hiding" game, with parent or older child. Child hides toy under box or blanket and then adult must find it.
16. Will put toys away in a familiar place, when he/she is asked.
17. Likes stickers and wants to put them on his/her body parts or clothing. May put them on top of each other.
18. Experiments with lines and circular motions when coloring or drawing.

Play Behaviors, continued

Age of Exploring, continued

19. Defends his/her possessions when someone tries to take them; says "mine!"
20. Plays better with an older child than another child his/her age.
21. Enjoys the repetition of simple nursery rhymes, fingerplays with caregiver, again and again.
22. Enjoys moving to music with a marked rhythm (running, swinging, etc.).
23. Shows an interest in using a child-size scissors, but needs help.
24. Gives names to things he/she makes out of clay or other materials (e.g., calls clay "cookies").
25. May spontaneously sing phrases of a familiar song, but hesitates or resists when asked to sing for others.
26. Likes to load up play truck with objects.
27. Turns pages of picture book, one page at a time.
28. Will play with materials identical to those of child playing next to him (clay, sand, etc.).

Play Behaviors, continued

Age of Emerging Independence

1. "Reads" from picture book by talking about pictures.
2. Likes to "dress-up" and adopt familiar reciprocal roles in play with another child, such as parent/child or cook/restaurant goer.
3. Puts toys away after we suggest it without assistance or supervision.
4. Enjoys having adults read to him/her.
5. Likes stories with nonsense rhymes and funny words.
6. Will add "silly" language to stories.
7. Paints with brush and may cover entire page.
8. Constructs with blocks, e.g., builds an enclosed house, garage.
9. Likes making things that require cutting, pasting, taping.
10. Uses more language during play to describe activities.
11. Comments on the actions of his playmates in play (criticize, boss, and show sympathy or comfort to playmates.)
12. Will play with a small group of children in a common activity without constant adult supervision.
13. Communicates rules of games and what he wants others to do in a game situation.
14. Engages in pretend and imaginative play and assigns roles to people and objects, e.g., child holds up block and says "Let's pretend this is a cake."
15. Enjoys coloring and drawing and likes to show off "work."
16. Recognizes several songs and enjoys identifying them.
17. Gallops, jumps and runs in fairly good time to music.
18. Molds clay or dough into forms (e.g., flat, round "cakes," long, narrow strips, balls, etc.)
19. Show less inhibition in group singing.
20. Shares toys and is more willing to take turns.

Play Behaviors, continued

Age of Emerging Independence, continued

21. Rides a tricycle or hot wheels.
22. Likes to play bean-bag games with a large target, such as a waste basket.
23. Will throw and catch a ball.
24. Follows rules and respects boundaries that have been set without constant reminders.
25. Appreciates a sense of humor, attempts to make others laugh by making silly sounds or performing antics.
26. Seems aware of "good" and "bad" things, e.g., tells playmates when they are breaking the rules of a game or not playing "nicely" with a toy.
27. Likes to perform for adults and gain their praise.
28. Spontaneously joins play involving other children and adults.
29. In fingerpainting, will experiment with finger movements as well as whole hand movements.
30. Expresses feelings of satisfaction with certain play activities, e.g., "I like swinging."
31. Will play table games with adult supervision.
32. Likes to climb on jungle gyms and swing equipment.
33. Makes cuts with a child's size scissors without assistance.
34. Asks permission to use toys of others.
35. Makes roads in sandbox for toy cars.

Play Behaviors, continued

Age of Independence

1. Plays well in small group for longer periods of time.
2. Shares activities and toys independently.
3. Plays games like Tag, Duck-Duck Goose or Drop the Hanky where another child is "it" and the others have to do something to either become "it" or avoid being "it" according to the rules of the game.
4. Plans and carries out play activities by him or herself, e.g., "I'm going to build a house."
5. When involved in pretend/imaginary play likes to plan and include others (brothers, sisters, pets, friends).
6. Will do pretend/imaginary play which does not require any toys or materials to carry it out (pretends to ride a horse in the backyard).
7. Wants to know what an object or toy is made of and how it works.
8. Plays a variety of board (i.e., Candyland, Checkers) and card or floor games (Old Maid, Go Fish). Doesn't need parent help as he/she knows the rules, can take turns and know who's winning. These games involve matching pictures, designs, counting and colors.
9. Likes to participate and initiate games which require large muscles, e.g., hopping, jumping, skipping, or swinging.
10. Likes to make designs with chalk, crayons, markers.
11. Likes to draw pictures with more detail.
12. Plays alone contentedly for periods of time in appropriate situation, (e.g., when parent is busy with adult guests).
13. Appears to enjoy stories with a variety of themes. Humorous stories have high appeal.
14. Likes to dramatize songs.
15. Will show sympathy for or comfort playmates in distress.
16. Likes experimenting with textures and mixing colors, e.g., fingerpaints, play-doh, water, and sand.

Play Behaviors, continued

Age of Independence, continued

18. Likes to bounce, catch, and kick a ball.
19. Takes turn blowing bubbles with friends; one blows the bubble while one pops them.
20. Likes to have explanations of what is real versus not real, e.g., wanting to talk about a superhero being real or not.
21. Enjoys imitating grown-up behavior both in language and actions, e.g., "bosses" and uses affectionate phrases with younger brother/sister like a parent might do.
22. Likes to operate mechanical toys and video games.
23. Looks forward to taking special trips, e.g., going to swimming pool or movie.
24. Enjoys outdoor play with brothers and sisters, e.g., taking a walk in a park, building a snowman or going sledding.
25. Enjoys being read to and given information.
26. Plans and carries out play activity from previous day.
27. Makes recognizable objects with some purpose in mind, (e.g., cuts out strips of green paper to use as money in the play store or makes a necklace out of yarn and macaroni).
28. Likes to be successful, but is willing to attempt new activities to see if he/she can succeed.
29. Uses other material in combination with clay such as tinkertoys, buttons, blocks, etc.
30. Enjoys riddles and repeating simple knock-knock jokes.
31. Makes more elaborate structures in the sandbox, like tunnels, hills, etc.
32. Builds roads, bridges or even a town with blocks.

Play and the Handicapped Child

Information to Consider*

Beginning of Play

Play activities between parents and their handicapped children may be slow to develop because mothers and fathers may be overwhelmed with the difficulties of caring for their children, especially if they have serious medical difficulties. These children may also be slow to respond and their parents may have trouble coping with feelings of disappointment with their child. However, most parents and infants soon begin to initiate interactions and to respond to each other's smiles, voices, and movements. One mother of a young child with multiple handicaps that included blindness noticed one day that when she pressed her daughter's hand, her daughter squeezed back. This same little girl, who responded very little to any other stimuli, showed her pleasure in hearing her mother sing a familiar song through her facial expressions and vocalizations. This mother and child, through play, had found a way to enjoy mutually satisfying social interactions.

Brian and Shirley Sutton-Smith (1974) state that parental care, cuddling, and rocking of infants precede development of a pattern of mutual responding. Parents talk to their baby and gaze into the baby's eyes to focus attention. Bouncing, singing, exaggerated social expressions, and a variety of sounds follow as parents seek to keep their baby's attention. Babies also seek to capture their parents' attention by smiling, gurgling, and wiggling. When there are sensory deficits, parents must rely on the intact senses to elicit responses from their child. The parents of a three year old deaf-blind child discovered that she wanted them to lift her up again. Not only were her parents learning through play to respond to her signals, but she was learning to communicate; and together parents and child were laying the foundation for language. The main focus of the interaction, however, was having fun with each other. The adult enjoyed making the child laugh, and the child enjoyed the excitement of being tossed in the air. It also gave her a sense of competence to be able to indicate that she wanted to be tossed in the air and to have her wants understood.

Elements of Play

Sometimes parents of handicapped children are so dedicated to providing early intervention for their child that they spend all their spare time teaching their child. How is play different from teaching and caring for a child?

Play takes place in a relaxed atmosphere where there are no undue restrictions. The goal is to have fun, "to get in touch with each other" (Sutton-Smith, 1974), to enjoy each other. Play gives children freedom to experiment and make mistakes, to practice over and over skills that

*An excerpt from Parent Group Guide: Topics for Families of Young Children with Handicaps, by Elizabeth F. Gerlock.

Play and the Handicapped Child, continued

they have learned. Piaget (1962) observed that children who had learned to produce an action, such as shaking objects while they held them, later laughed when they performed the same action--thus showing their pleasure in producing an action that they had learned to do well. In play there are no failures or evaluations. Sometimes children perform more difficult skills in the relaxed atmosphere of play than they do in a structured teaching situation (Chance, 1979). Adults playing with children who are very destructive or self-stimulatory will need to make greater efforts to guide children's play, to gain more eye contact, and to encourage normal play activities when they occur (Bromwich, 1981). Play may not be as rewarding for parents with a very difficult child as it is for parents with a very responsive child, but parents can become sensitive to small gains that their child makes.

Play gives children an opportunity to influence their environment. A child with severe handicaps hits her musical ferris wheel and causes it to begin moving and playing again. Another child discovers cause and effect by touching the moving feet on a wind-up toy, stopping them, then lifting his finger to allow them to move again. However, a child playing alone, especially a handicapped child, may think of a limited number of actions in interacting with toys. Chance (1979) states that children learn to play most effectively when adults play with them. Adults can follow the lead of the child and then elaborate on what the child does. If a child bangs on his highchair tray with a spoon, his mother bangs on the tray and taps the cup to make two sounds instead of one. If a child pushes a toy car, the father pushes the car and parks it in a make-believe garage. In Learning Through Play, Lewis states that adult response to children's actions is crucial to children's developing a feeling of competency and to understand that their actions produce consequences (Chance, 1979).

Social Development in Play

Young children saying "mama" after their mothers say "mama" or hiding their eyes after their fathers hide their eyes are learning to imitate and to take turns. Children engaged in pretend play are learning the social rules that govern certain situations and are learning how other people feel (Chance, 1979). However, children with handicaps may be less imaginative in their play. Warren (1977) reports that Singer and Streiner found that the imaginative content of the fantasy play of blind children whom they studied was significantly lower than that of sighted children. By playing with their children, parents can help them learn to play more imaginatively (Chance, 1979) and also can help the children with handicaps learn to play with other children, including sisters or brothers. Adults can serve as models both to show handicapped children how to play and to show other children ways to involve handicapped children in play, including ways to treat unusual behavior.

Play and the Handicapped Child, continued

When Not to Play

Children need time to play alone, to practice skills, and to make problem-solving discoveries by themselves. Sometimes children may be engrossed in their play and an adult entering their world would be an intrusion. Play should continue only as long as it is fun for both child and adult (Chance, 1979). By forcing themselves to play when they are tired and would rather be resting or doing something else, parents may create an atmosphere that is more damaging than helpful to their child. In addition, play with young children should be discontinued when they become tired or bored.

Conclusion

Play is a time for parents to enjoy their children, to respond sensitively to them, and to help them learn. Play is also a time when children can initiate their own activities, thereby developing a sense of competency. Parents can help by elaborating on what their child does when they play together in a relaxed atmosphere.

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- Piaget, J. Play, Dreams, and Imitation in Childhood. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1962.
- Sutton-Smith, B., and Sutton-Smith, S. How to Play with your Children (And When Not To). New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1974.

Enhancing Play for Children with Specific Handicapping Conditions

Visually Impaired

1. Spatial words often present problems to the visually impaired child since they are associated with visual space. Linking the concepts to the terms is very important if the child is to develop meaningful language. (Encourage the child to feel the corners of a box and identify the top, bottom, and sides, for example.)
2. When introducing a blind or visually impaired child to a new space or environment you may want to follow these suggestions:
 - a. Use a point of reference (such as a door).
 - b. Move clockwise around the perimeter of the space.
 - c. Describe the major features and objects as the child examines them.
 - d. Always relate the major features back to the reference point.
 - e. Repeat several times, encouraging more independence each time.
 - f. Work toward having the child move independently from the "home base" to the major features and eventually to move from one location to another without using the reference point.
 - g. Keep the room arrangement constant.
3. Provide the child with a variety of tactile, manipulative, and auditory experiences: use objects the child can feel; use actual objects rather than facsimiles, if possible; use toys which produce sounds.
4. Consistently pair simple, accurate language with objects and experiences the child encounters in his/her environment.
5. Talk about what you are doing when the child is in the room with you.
6. When doing paper/pencil activities use non-glossy white paper and a dark felt pen.
7. Give clear directions. Avoid vague words such as "this," or "over there."
8. Encourage the use of remaining vision by asking the child to look at objects.

Enhancing Play, continued

Hearing Impaired

1. Consult with parents and a specialist to determine the child's language level. Determine an appropriate communication mode (which may include signing, finger spelling, and/or oral language), and incorporate this into all of the child's experiences.
2. Provide the child with a variety of hearing experiences to take advantage of any residual hearing.
3. Get down to the child's eye level so he or she can see your face when you speak. Try to face the light when you speak to a child with a hearing problem. If the light is in his or her eyes it will be difficult for the child to see your lips.
4. Speak naturally, at normal volume and speed. If you tend to speak fast, slow your speech down and articulate. However, do not exaggerate your words or lip movement - this will only confuse the child.
5. Be sure you have the child's attention before speaking. Speak in short, simple, and whole sentences. If all the child is exposed to is baby talk or broken sentences, that is all he or she will learn. The goal is to teach normal language.
6. Give visual cues to what you are saying. Touch the object you are talking about. Use gestures and facial expressions to assist you in conveying your message.
7. Use visually interesting, brightly colored and tactually stimulating objects.
8. Provide opportunities for music and rhythm experiences. Let the hearing impaired child feel the sounds of a drum or piano. Rhythm can be seen and felt, as well as heard.
9. If the child wears a hearing aid consult with his or her audiologist or parents to familiarize yourself with the hearing aid and its working order. Monitor the equipment daily; make sure the volume is correct, and that the equipment is in good working order and free of dirt, wax, and breaks in the cord. Extra batteries for the aid should be kept at school.
10. Be aware of the acoustic environment. A hearing aid amplifies ALL sounds. Avoid exposing the child to extraneous sounds and use sound absorbing materials whenever possible.
11. For the profoundly deaf child use vision as the primary input source. Allow the child to see what is happening at all times by removing visual barriers.

Enhancing Play, continued

Physically or Orthopedically Impaired

1. Proper handling and positioning of the child is important; consult with occupational and physical therapists to determine appropriate positions for each activity.
 - a. A prone position over a bolster will facilitate head/trunk control and allow the child to make visual contact with the environment.
 - b. By placing a child in a side-lying position you will free the child's top arm to allow the manipulation of objects with more ease.
 - c. Proper positioning, appropriate surfaces and stimulation activities will increase tone for hypotonic children.
 - d. Proper positioning, appropriate surfaces and relaxation activities will decrease tone for hypertonic children.
2. Remove as many of the physical and environmental barriers to the child's direct involvement as you can. Some questions to consider are:
 - a. Where should the activity take place?
 - b. What positions will allow maximum freedom for the child to see the activity and to move his/her arms and legs?
 - c. What materials or modifications of equipment are needed?
3. Adapt activities and instructional materials so that minimal movements by the child produce effects on the environment. For example, attach velcro to a mitten and to an object; this will allow the child with minimal grasp to pick objects up. Battery operated switches and devices may also be utilized.
4. Provide a variety of opportunities for the child to use small muscles (sponges to squeeze during water play, soft play-dough to squeeze, pound, and pull on, for example.)
5. Encourage the use of both hands at the same time in a variety of positions (sidelying, prone, supine, sitting); also encourage crossing midline.
6. During water play make sure the water is warm. Cold water may increase problems with muscle control in children with cerebral palsy.
7. Use adaptive equipment which allows the child to be a part of the group, participate as normally as possible, and maintain contact with the environment. For example, an elastic wrist band with jingle bells attached will enable the child to become "a member of the band."

Enhancing Play, continued

Mentally Retarded

1. A child who is mentally retarded will often exhibit play behaviors appropriate to his or her developmental level of functioning. Consider this when planning activities and choosing materials.
2. A child who is mentally retarded may not know what to do with materials or may use them inappropriately. Demonstrate proper use of materials by providing concrete directions and actual "hands on" experience, with supervision, the first few times new materials are used.
3. Provide realistic expectations based on what the child can currently do, but also encourage him or her to stretch beyond that stage once the child has mastered a certain play skill.
4. Abstract play may be difficult for a retarded child. "Pretend" play should center around his or her real life experiences such as riding on the school bus, going to the store or going to the doctor, rather than being a firefighter or super-hero.
5. With a child who is severely retarded you may need to motor him or her through an activity. For example, put the crayon in the child's hand and place yours over his or her hand moving it in a circular motion. Or put a child through an action by working from behind so that your body forms a kinesthetic model for the desired action.
6. Structure play activities so that the child will meet with success. Through task analysis break the activities down into small, sequential steps.
7. Provide a variety of activities that are challenging but not overwhelming for the child.
8. Praise the child for his or her efforts as well as accomplishments.
9. Keep play activities short, simple and meaningful.
10. Even though severely retarded children can not participate in many of the play activities of the developmentally higher functioning children, they still enjoy and learn from being included in the group's activities. The sound, movement, and energy in the classroom or home environment will stimulate their interest in the environment and this in turn will help them learn.

Enhancing Play, continued

Emotionally Disturbed

1. Provide developmentally appropriate play materials to avoid frustrating a child with low tolerance.
2. A positive self-concept is extremely important to all children. It aids in the development of good attitudes toward learning, the environment, themselves, and others. A child with emotional problems may have low self-esteem. An adult can nurture the child's self-control by:
 - a. providing positive reinforcement for appropriate interactions;
 - b. breaking play activities down into small sequential steps when needed; a child diagnosed as having emotional or behavioral problems is inclined to do too much, too fast, too soon, which usually guarantees failure;
 - c. anticipating when the frustration level is rising and intervening before failure occurs or the child loses control.
3. Play activities should be organized; a child with emotional/behavioral problems may have difficulty coping with inconsistency and disorganization.
4. Set consistent rules and limits prior to a play activity, and follow through on them.
5. A child who is emotionally disturbed may have difficulty moving from one play activity to another. Prepare the child when an activity is coming to an end. For example, "We'll be picking up the blocks soon so finish building your tower." Then explain what will come next; for example, "After we pick up the blocks we'll be looking at a story."
6. When planning activities take into consideration how the child relates to the materials used, the classroom environment, the adults and his/her peers. Adjust the activity accordingly by simplifying the activity, reducing the noise or frustration level, reducing the number of children involved in the play activity, and/or changing the nature and amount of materials.
7. A child with emotional problems may be easily distracted. Play activities should be short and meaningful.

Enhancing Play, continued

Emotionally Disturbed, continued

8. Encourage a child to verbalize rather than act out his or her feelings. If the child is unable to verbalize, verbally mirror his or her actions. For example, "You're angry, so you are throwing the blocks." Then offer a more appropriate behavior; for example, "Blocks aren't for throwing. Let's build a tower and then if you'd like to you may knock it down."
9. A withdrawn or passive child may also benefit from "therapeutic play." It is important to be aware of the methods and techniques which are most effective in dealing with this type of child. For more information you may want to refer to: Axline, Virginia. Play Therapy: The Inner Dynamics of Childhood. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1977.

Speech and Language Impaired

1. Establish and maintain a secure, relaxed play environment in which a child can explore, experiment, and imitate.
2. Provide opportunities for a non-verbal child to play with toys or materials which make noise (e.g., trucks, animals, etc.), and encourage the child to imitate or repeat the noises the toys represent.
3. Imitate sounds produced by the child during play and expand on them by varying the sound and action patterns.
4. Listen attentively and show an interest in what the child is saying. Use short, simple sentences when talking with a child who has language delays.
5. Give the child time to respond. Often a language delayed child needs extra time to formulate a response.
6. Try to determine what the child is saying from the context of the situation. If an occasional word can be understood, repeat that word as a question.
7. Expand on the child's spontaneous utterances by inserting adjectives or modifiers. (Example: the child says "big ball"; the adult responds "the big red ball bounces"; the child says "him took ball"; the adult asks "he took the ball?")
8. Provide opportunities for repetition, imitation, and generalization.
9. Encourage communication, interaction, and cooperation among peers as well as an opportunity for appropriate peer modeling.
10. Provide opportunities for a child to describe his or her drawing, painting or play-dough objects.

Enhancing Play, continued

Speech and Language Impaired, continued

11. Open-ended questions are good for eliciting language from a child who isn't talking. (For example, "Tell me about ____." "What do you think ____?" "Tell me more about ____.")
12. Describe objects, events, attributes, and relationships while the child is at play, and encourage the child to do the same.
13. Talk about what's important and meaningful to the child; let his/her interests be your guide to conversation.
14. If correcting misarticulations during play, do so in a "matter-of-fact" way. Simply repeat the misarticulated word correctly. It is not necessary to have the child repeat the word correctly; in fact, doing so may take away from the play activity at hand.
15. Have fun with language; fingerplays, songs, and rhymes should be a part of every preschooler's life!

Some of these items were adapted from the Headstart booklets entitled Mainstreaming Preschoolers, by the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. For additional information on adapting your curriculum to meet the needs of children with various handicapping conditions you may want to refer to these booklets:

Mental Retardation:	OHDS 81-31110
Visual Impairment:	OHDS 80-31112
Speech/Language:	OHDS 81-31113
Orthopedic Handicaps:	OHDS 81-31114
Emotional Disturbance:	OHDS 81-31115
Hearing Impairment:	OHDS 81-31116
Learning Disabilities	OHDS 80-31117

Other resources for severely, profoundly, or multiply handicapped children

Wehman, Paul. Curriculum Design for the Severely and Profoundly Handicapped. Human Sciences Press, 72 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011.

Anderson, Fay Bennett. Activities for the Young and Severely Handicapped. FACT, 607 Island View Drive, Brunswick, Georgia 31520. (\$38.00 for six books)

Observing Children at Play

By carefully observing a young child's play one can gather a great deal of information about his/her developmental skills, learning style, and preferences.

The use of an instrument to guide your observations can reveal how a child's play abilities may parallel other areas of development.

On the next page you will find one example of a form that could assist you in recording the responses of a child functioning at a very young age level. Other types of guides can be found in the following references:

Garwood, S. Gray, and Rebecca R. Fewell, eds. Observational Grid for Toy Interaction in "Assessing Handicapped Infants," Educating Handicapped Infants, Issues in Development and Intervention, Aspen Systems Corporation, Rockville, Maryland, 1983, p. 286.

Hohmann, M.; B. Banet, and D. Weikart. Chapter 4 and Appendix 5 (High/Scope Child Observation Record) in Young Children in Action, A Manual for Preschool Educators, High/Scope Press, Ypsilanti, Michigan, 1979.

Tilton, J., and D. Ottinger. "Comparison of Toy Behavior of Autistic, Retarded, and Normal Children," in Psychological Reports, 1964, #15, pp. 967-975.

Wabash Center for the Mentally Retarded, Inc. "Observation of Free Play" in Guidebook to Early Developmental Training, Allyn and Bacon, Inc., Boston, Massachusetts, 1977, pp. 241-243.

Sample Observation Form

List toys presented	1	2	3	4	5
Visually attends					
Tracks object					
Attends to auditory cues					
Reaches for object					
Touches object					
Grasps object					
Brings object to mouth					
Brings object before eyes and examines it					
Bangs, shakes, or waves object					
Inspects & investigates object					
Drops or throws					
Retrieves or attempts to retrieve					
Manipulates object appropriately; describe. (e.g., puts toy tele- phone to ear)					
Show or offers object to adult					
Length of interaction with toy					
List vocalizations					
When all 5 toys are presented at one time, the child's preference is:					

Notes:

Adult Involvement in Play

If children are to experiment, test, and practice through play, they need an atmosphere conducive to play, materials for play, and the opportunity to use them. Above all, they will need adults to accept their play as worthwhile and to appreciate the work and effort that goes into their play. A supportive adult responds to a child's initiations in play and expands the scope of play while still allowing the child to take the lead.

Children who are handicapped may require additional assistance from adults to acquire social play skills which are critical to their successful integration with non-handicapped peers. They may also need direction to develop more elaborate play or a wider range of play activities which they can then use to master skills in other areas of development. While we are acknowledging the need for adult involvement, we emphasize that the ultimate goal is that the child's play become as self-directed as possible.

The following framework was designed to assist you in determining the appropriate types of involvement needed in children's play activities. Once you have set the stage for play, observe each child's play activities and abilities to determine what level of adult involvement is needed. Most likely you will move back and forth along this continuum; in fact, this is desirable, as you evaluate the ever-changing amount of adult involvement needed to enhance play in a supportive manner.

Adult Involvement in Play, continued

Framework

Manipulating the Environment

Post photographs of children engaged in a variety of play activities. Such a play chart can give children an idea of what they may want to do.

Provide a balance of raw materials which the child can shape to his/her own purpose (i.e., paper, blocks, clay) and finished materials which can also be used by more than one child at a time (e.g., dolls, plastic animals, cars, trucks and dishes).

Some children will need realistic props to move through a play sequence, but as play abilities grow stronger, provide abstract props which can be used in a variety of ways requiring children to be more creative. (A yard of white netting could be a veil, a fish net or a cloud.)

Encouraging & Reinforcing

Look on in a supportive and accepting manner, ready to assist if needed.

Offer nonverbal cues of approval (head nod, wink, smile, etc.) to reinforce children at play.

Reinforce children engaged in cooperative play activities by making a positive statement such as, "You two are playing so nice. I like the way you're sharing," or "Sam and Gina are building a house together, that's great!"

Encourage children to talk about their play (e.g., "Tell me about your drawing.") and review their play aloud or ask questions to promote incidental learning (e.g., "Can you pop the smallest bubble?").

Prompting & Directing

Use a simple felt story, a picture book or a song to motivate children to enact a play theme together (e.g., after singing "Wheels on the Bus," the adult asked the children how they might "act out" the song.)

Help children get started by assigning roles and/or defining the setting. For example, "Scott, you can be the cook, and Nancy, you can come to his restaurant for dinner."

Help children sustain their play by suggesting a new problem or adding new props, (e.g., two children don white coats and begin to fight over who will be the doctor. The adult takes two dolls over and asks the doctors to examine the "sick babies").

Assisting & Coaching

Physically assist by moving child into closer proximity of peers at play or assist child in offering toys to peers, handling materials, etc.

Coach targeted child to approach a peer at play with rehearsed request to join in and supply him/her with positive phrases to reinforce the peer who responds favorably, (e.g., "It's fun to play with you.")

Provide play materials that foster interaction such as toy telephones and pair the child with a more socially competent peer who has been "enlisted" to initiate and maintain the play activity.

Participating & Modeling

Assume a role in play, define a setting and encourage the child to adopt a reciprocal role. (Storekeeper/shopper or librarian/booklender)

Act as a coplayer and ask the child to take on an identical role. (The child and teacher could both be passengers on a bus or shoppers at a store.) Guide the child through a short scenario and encourage him/her to play along.

Model a sequence of play behaviors with realistic objects. After repeating the scenario, invite the child to "take over" for you, (e.g., feeding the doll, wiping its face and putting it to bed.)

Adult Involvement in Play, continued

Further Reading

- Beckman, Kohl. "The Effects of Social and Isolate Toys on the Interactions and Play of Integrated and Nonintegrated Groups of Preschoolers." Education and Training of the Mentally Retarded 19 (1984):169-174.
- Boyd, R., and Bluma, S. "Expansion, Play and Materials." In Parent Readings: Portage Parent Program, Portage Project, CESA #5, Portage, WI, 1977.
- Guralnick, M. J. "Social Interactions Among Preschool Children." Exceptional Children 46 (1980):248-253.
- Haring, T. G. "Teaching Between-Class Generalization of Toy-Play Behavior to Handicapped Children." Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis 18 (1985):127-139.
- Hohmann, M. et. al. "Experiencing and Representing: Role Playing." In Young Children in Action: A Manual for Preschool Educators, Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope Press, 1979, p. 178-181.
- Li, Anita K. F. "Toward More Elaborate Pretend Play." Mental Retardation 23 (1985):131-136.
- McHale, S., and McHale, G. "Using Play to Facilitate the Social Development of Handicapped Children." In Play and Development, Topics in Early Childhood Special Education. Edited by A. Mori, et. al. Aspen Publications 2 (October 1982):76-86.
- Rogers-Warren, A., et. al. "Play and Learning Together: Patterns of Social Interaction in Handicapped and Nonhandicapped Children." Journal of the Division for Early Childhood 3 (1981):56-63.
- Rubin, R.; Fisher, J.; and Doering, S. "Play and Playthings." In Your Toddler, Ages One and Two. New York: Collier MacMillan Publishers, Johnson and Johnson Child Development Publications, 1980.
- Strain, P. "An Experimental Analysis of Peer Social Initiations on the Behavior of Withdrawn Preschool Children; Some Training and Generalization Effects." Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology 5 (1977):445-455.
- Terrell, B., et. al. "Symbolic Play in Normal and Language-Impaired Children." Journal of Speech and Hearing Research 27 (1984): 424-430.
- Wolf, D. "Play as a Mirror for Development." In Developmental and Clinical Aspects of Young Children's Play, pp. 15-26. Edited by Ruth Pelz. WESTAR Series paper #17, ERIC #ED228796, 1982.
- Wolfgang, C. "Mainstreaming Aggressive and Passive Preschoolers Through Play." In Early Childhood. Edited by Percy and Golubchick Avery Publishing Co., pp. 216-219.

B. Planning a Play Workshop for Parents

You may decide to introduce the subject of play and distribute the parent booklet, An Invitation to Play, through a group workshop. If so, this section provides information to assist you in the planning of a workshop.

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Workshop Planning Checklist

Before the Workshop

- ☐ Review materials and resources.
- ☐ Decide on general content and format.
- ☐ Draft a cover letter explaining the purpose of the workshop; include a scheduling survey.
- ☐ Upon reviewing the returned scheduling surveys, determine the most convenient date and time for parents to meet.
- ☐ Send out invitations and refreshment request forms well in advance of the workshop.
- ☐ Arrange for a room and any A.V. equipment needed.
- ☐ Have handouts printed.
- ☐ Follow up with a phone call to those parents who do not respond; make arrangements for child care and/or transportation if needed.
- ☐ Prepare displays.
- ☐ Prepare an evaluation form to determine the effectiveness of the workshop and the materials presented.

Day of the Workshop:

- ☐ Arrange room (set up chairs, tables, displays, etc.)
- ☐ Set up A.V. equipment; check to be sure it is in proper working order.
- ☐ Gather any items needed for serving refreshments (napkins, cups, utensils, coffee pot, pitcher, etc.)
- ☐ If you are providing child care, gather toys and materials to be used, and set them up in an area which will not disturb the parent workshop (for example, in an adjacent room). Go over instructions with child care staff (aids, parents, high school students).
- ☐ Provide name tags.

Workshop Planning Checklist, continued

After the Workshop:

- ☐ Review the evaluation forms.
- ☐ Prepare a letter to review the workshop and thank the parents for their participation.
- ☐ Send thank you notes to those who prepared refreshments and provided child care or transportation.

Maintain interest in the subject of play throughout the year by using the suggested activities in section IV, as well as your own ideas.

AN INVITATION To PLAY



35

PARENTS

You're Invited to a Workshop on the Subject of Play

When:

Where:

Child care will be provided

Workshop Displays

You may want to prepare appealing displays for parents to browse through before the workshop begins. These displays may serve as conversation starters and encourage discussion. Consider these suggestions:

1. Photographs of the children in your program playing with a variety of materials. Provide a brief narrative explaining the skills used and developed with each activity. This will help parents understand the connection between play and learning.
2. Slides or picture collages of children and/or families playing together; captions add to the fun.
3. Display materials and toys which can be used for several years. List the various tasks for each developmental level on a card and place next to the toy. For example, stacking cups can be used with children functioning at a younger developmental level to increase such skills as picking up and releasing objects, banging two objects together, and knocking them down when in a tower. For higher functioning children, stacking cups facilitate color and size recognition, nesting skills, sequencing by color and size, as well as development of fine motor skills.
4. "Junk" or "throw-aways" can be displayed under the caption, "What could your child do with these?" This type of display may encourage parents to take advantage of the many things that can be done with household items and a variety of other items such as empty paper towel tubes, packing materials, empty boxes, and so on.
5. Display children's drawings and paintings with an explanation that this type of play is a form of self-expression as well as an activity which promotes use of fine motor skills and imagination.
6. Books, pamphlets, and other resources with ordering information. See Section III Resources, on pages 76-83 for references.

C. Conducting a Play Workshop for Parents

Review the information presented in this guidebook as well as other resources, and decide what would be most valuable to the parents you serve. Structure the workshop accordingly.

This section provides suggested workshop activities and handouts. Feel free to revise the format to meet your needs.

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Suggested Handouts	
How Children Come to Know the World Around Them	41
Criteria for Choosing a Play Activity	42
Setting the Stage for Play	43

Workshop Activities

Consider the following workshop format for introducing the subject of play and the parent booklet, An Invitation to Play.

1. As an "icebreaker" or opportunity for parents to get acquainted, you may want to consider one of the following activities:

- A. Introduce each parent while passing around a photograph of his or her child. Ask the parents to state their child's name and favorite play activity.
- B. Tape to the bottom of each chair a card with one of the following questions written on it. Ask the parents to introduce themselves and answer the question found under their chairs.

"What's your child's favorite toy?"

"What's your child's favorite play activity?"

"What was your favorite play activity as a child?" etc.

2. As an introduction to play, place the following definitions of play inside balloons and blow them up. Toss the balloons to parents and encourage them to pop the balloons one at a time and read the definitions aloud.

"Play is life itself to a child."

"Play is the very essence of childhood."

"The same elements that motivate children to play - enjoyment, curiosity, challenge, and discovery - are the same elements that motivate children to learn."

"Play allows children to explore, imitate, discover, and learn about the world around them."

"All areas of development can be observed in play activities: cognitive, language, motor, self-help, and social/emotional."

3. Next show a video or slide show of children in your program playing with a variety of materials. If this is not possible, consider viewing the film, Child's Play. This twenty-minute film is available on a loan basis from the EC:EEN Project, Department of Public Instruction, 125 South Webster Street, Madison, WI 53707.

The film emphasizes the role of play in the development of children from babyhood through the preschool years and shows how growth in all areas is linked to play. Examples of the many types of play are described in this film, such as solitary play, parallel play, associative play, and cooperative play.

Workshop Activities, continued

4. Review the areas of development and how they are enhanced through play activities. Encourage parents to share play activities they enjoyed as children. For example, a parent may fondly recall dressing up in old clothes. With the group, list and categorize some of the skills which are required or used for that specific activity.

For example:

Cognitive:	imitation, imagination, problem solving
Language:	talking, imitation
Social/Emotional:	role playing, sharing
Self-Help and Motor:	buttoning, zipping, dressing and undressing

5. Distribute and discuss the handout, "Criteria for Choosing a Play Activity," on page 42.
6. Review the handout, "Setting the Stage for Play," on page 43, with parents.
7. Introduce the parent booklet, An Invitation to Play. Discuss its format and purpose, and distribute a copy to each parent. Review the booklet together. You may want to consider distributing these booklets on a loan basis in an effort to recycle them for coming years.
8. Allow time for questions and discussion. Close the workshop by reminding the parents once again that they are their child's most valuable teacher. Explain to them that play and its importance will be emphasized throughout the year with newsletters, monthly calendars, and activity sheets.

Workshop Discussion Questions

1. What are your child's favorite play activities? How long will he or she stay with these activities?
2. What toys or playthings does your child have but rarely plays with?
3. What time of day seems to work best for playing together? Why?
4. What kinds of differences do you see in your child's play when he or she is:
 - alone?
 - with you?
 - beside another child?
 - with another child?
 - with a group of children?
5. What are some ways to encourage new learning experiences during play? (For example, expanding on existing play activities by adding new props or questions to stimulate thoughts about the play activity.)
6. What do you see as your role in your child's play?

How Children Come to Know the World Around Them

Can you think of examples of when your child does the following things?

Imitates:

The developing child is like an apprentice. In play he/she comes to know the world by copying the attitudes, behaviors, and speech patterns of significant people in his/her life. The child also imitates his or her own behavior.

Explores:

In play, the child seeks to know and understand the outside world by analyzing how things work, how they came to be the way they are, and what they can do, thus discovering the relationships among people, objects, events, and situations in his/her environment.

Tests:

The child is motivated by a "What will happen if . . . ?" attitude, testing to find out the effects of his or her behavior. Determining the outcome of one's behavior, whether it will be accepted or rejected, helps the child learn to deal with emotions and to control impulses.

Constructs:

The child becomes a "builder," putting things together in an attempt to organize his or her own experiences. As the child creates models that represent real things and engages in imaginary activities, he/she learns to make decisions, to solve problems, to answer questions, to meet goals, and to deal with frustrations.

Which of your examples would you consider "play"?

Which of your examples would you consider "work"?

Criteria for Choosing a Play Activity

The activity should:

- be process (not product) oriented
- be self-directed, self-monitored by the child
- be uniquely performed by each child
- be experiential, involving the senses and including motion
- have no "rights," no "wrongs," no certain outcomes, no failures
- have verbal cues/prompts from the adult, but have minimal rules and "cookbook" directions
- require a minimum of special equipment
- promote repetition, expansion, variation
- have multi-level, multi-use features
- provide the child with the opportunity for interactions with peers, adults, and his or her environment
- generate laughter, smiles, exhaustion, fun and the desire to share the activity

Setting the Stage for Play

Your Child

Consider how your child is feeling when you suggest a play idea. If your child is excited, you may want to choose a quiet activity, such as coloring, puzzle play or sand play; if he or she is bored, you may want to chase bubbles or dress-up in old clothes.

Keep in mind that when a child is not feeling well, he or she may want to return to the earlier stages of play or simply crawl into your lap and look at a book with you.

Encourage your child's efforts rather than judge them; it's the "doing" that's most important to a child--not the finished product.

Praise your child for trying, experimenting, and using imagination in play. (For example, "You're such a clever boy," or "I'm so proud of you for trying.")

Encourage growth and variety. If your child seems to choose the same activity because it's successful and "safe," introduce new materials and activities that will also prove to be successful and expand on them.

Play Area

Provide enough space to do the activity and make sure the space is available for the length of time needed.

Keep materials/toys in the same place so your child can find them. Vary the materials from time to time.

Make sure the area is safe (no sharp corners to fall on), and where an adult can keep an eye on the activities.

Play Materials

Consider your child's interests and skill levels when selecting toys and materials. Let your child be a part of the selection process.

Consider materials that can be used for more than one skill. (For example, colored blocks for the older child--for stacking, counting, and color recognition.)

Be sure the materials are safe and durable (no sharp edges, not small enough to swallow, and not easily broken).

Setting the Stage for Play, continued

Time

Provide adequate time to spend on an activity, allowing for set up, the activity itself, and clean up.

You may want to schedule a specific time each day or each week for "special play."

Clean Up

Alert your child that playtime is almost over so he/she can finish the activity. (For example, "We'll be picking up soon, so finish what you are doing.")

Praise your child for helping to put his/her toys away.

Encourage your child to help clean the table after painting or fold the clothes after dress-up and put them away.

If your child decides he/she is not ready to clean up, gently encourage your child and KEEP CALM. Giving your child a choice while cleaning up gives them the impression they are in control. Try this tactic: "Do you want to put the hat or the shoes away? Do you want to put the red beads or the green beads in the box first?"

ABOVE ALL HAVE FUN!

II.

Maintaining Interest In Play

Once the booklet, An Invitation to Play, has been introduced it is important to maintain interest in the subject of play throughout the year. This can be done in a number of ways, a few of which are provided in this section.

The following pages contain suggested activities to spark your imagination in maintaining the parents' interest. Also included are activity sheets which supplement the parent booklet.

By utilizing these suggestions, as well as your own ideas, you will instill a sense of enjoyment, motivation, and love for learning in the homes of the children you serve.



A. Supplemental Activity Sheets

This section provides an expansion on the activities in the parent booklet, An Invitation to Play. These activity sheets may be sent home periodically or used during home visits.

Not all of the activities are appropriate for all children. Review the sheets and revise as needed.

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My Very Own Place

Where:

tent	large empty box from appliance store
barrel	blanket over two chairs
closet	sheets over a clothes line
treehouse	under or behind a bed
behind couch	blanket over card table
under table	empty wading pool (fill with
under desk	pillows or blankets)

Ways to add to the fun:

mirrors
sign over door ("Bobby's House")
bubble sheets taken from packing
waterbed mattress (filled with air) on the floor
flashlight inside (talk about direction, follow light)
fluorescent stars (available at variety stores)
cellophane on "windows" of box "houses"
rugs, pillows, blankets to cuddle up in
radio or tape player to listen to
dolls, toys to play with
books to look at
snacks

Encourage:

imagination
the use of spatial words such
as in, under, behind, etc.
your child to crawl into a box
or tent, shake hands through
the "window," play peek-a-boo
from behind the couch, etc.



Make Believe with Boxes

What to do with them:

stack	crawl through
build	store things in them
push	nest various sizes
pull	sort by size or shape
count	decorate with paint, crayons,
climb into	markers

What to make with them:

puppet stage	furniture
play house	"TV screen"
animal cages	train, boat, car, bus

mouse holes (draw whiskers on child with eyebrow pencil to add to the fun)

obstacle course (talk about directional words: through, in, on, around, etc.)

mailbox (cut a slit for dropping "letters" in)

a child-size "neighborhood" with large appliance boxes or doll-size with smaller boxes for imaginary play

Workshop idea for parents of older, more experienced children:

Plan an evening or Saturday afternoon workshop for parents and children to build special things out of cardboard or boxes: a "neighborhood," a train, bus, boat, or "furniture," the ideas are endless! All you need is a lot of boxes, cardboard, paint, markers, utility knives, scissors, working hands, and A LOT OF IMAGINATION!



These activities are expansions from page 3 of the parent booklet, An Invitation to Play.

Dressing Up

Things to use:

old hats	aprons	dresses
scarves	capcs	slips
mittens	sweaters	blouses
gloves	wigs	shirts
purses	old watches	pants
jewelry	eyeglass frames	vests
shoes	coats	pajamas
boots	socks	ties



Things to do:

Pretend to be a:

mom	firefighter
dad	mailcarrier
cowboy	police officer
doctor	farmer
truck driver	grocer

Gather "People Bags" with items for role playing. For example, a "mail carrier bag" may have an old purse to use as the mailbag, a cap, old letters, envelopes, "junk mail," and so forth. A "grocer bag" may have an apron, empty food containers, boxes and cans, a grocery bag, and some "play money."

Identify the body parts while dressing and undressing:

"The hat goes on my head."

"The boots go on my feet."

"When I take off my pants, I see my legs."

Point to remember:

Choose items that are easy to put on/take off.

Encourage practice of self-help skills (buttoning, zipping, and so forth) that will meet with success.

Talk about how the items feel (soft, scratchy, bumpy, and so forth).

Keep items in a suitcase or clothes basket that your child can reach.

Encourage role play and language.

From time to time dress up with your child and role play too.

Take pictures of your child dressed up in funny clothes . . . they'll love it!

*These activities are expansions from page 4 of the parent booklet, An Invitation to Play.

Kitchen Play

The kitchen is a world of learning, with inexpensive playthings in every cupboard.

What to do with these items:

pick up objects with tongs
stack cups, cans, boxes, bowls
nest various sized bowls, cups, cans
fill and empty glasses, bowls, etc.
sort macaroni, popcorn, or dried beans into
muffin tins or empty egg cartons
make kitchen instruments (oatmeal box drum, spoon drum
sticks, or pan lids for cymbals)
wash and dry dishes
pretend to cook
play grocery store clerk with bags and empty boxes, cans, etc.
sort and count spoons, knives, forks
help bake; use rolling pin - talk about change in shape of
dough; use cookie cutters - talk about shapes made
help load dishwasher and label items as they're placed in it
keep unbreakable items that you allow your child to play with
in the same easy to reach place

Talk about:

texture
smell
taste

colors
temperature
empty/full

how many?
shapes
size



These activities are expansions from page 5 of the parent booklet, An Invitation to Play.

Round 'n Round It Goes



Types of balls:

wiffle
rubber
ping pong

volleyball
tennis ball
balloons

nerf
cloth
yarn
beach

(These balls may be more suitable for the lower
functioning or physically handicapped child)

"beeping" ball
bell ball
musical ball

(These balls provide the player with auditory cues [sounds]
which can be very helpful for children with a visual impair-
ment or children who need additional stimulation to attend)

Things to do with balls:

Play "basketball" using ball and wastebasket, laundry basket, etc.

Roll ball down inclines (hill, board, table leaves).

Place a small ball inside a cylinder (paper towel or wrapping
paper tube) and tilt it back and forth.

Roll ball to knock down objects in "bowling" fashion.

Blow ping pong balls across table.

Drop ball in container from standing position.

Bounce balls off walls, trees, etc.

Sit in a circle with legs open and roll ball back and forth.

Water balloon toss.

Bat at balloons or nerf balls suspended from the ceiling.

With a group of children, have each hold onto a corner of a
sheet or parachute and place the ball in the middle: shake
the sheet up and down; see how high the ball can go without
falling off the sheet.

*These activities are expansions from page 6 of the parent booklet, An Invitation to Play.

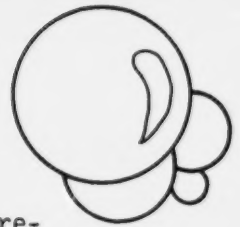
Round 'n Round It Goes, continued

Fasten noisemakers to the target; for example, bells to a corkboard target. When the child hits the target, he/she will be reinforced by the sound. This may be especially helpful for the visually impaired child.

Place a kitchen timer inside a wastebasket target to aide a visually impaired child in "making a basket."

Use a larger ball (such as a beach ball) for children with motor difficulties.

Bubblin' Bubbles



How to make bubbles:

Have your child help you measure, pour and mix the ingredients to make blowing bubbles:



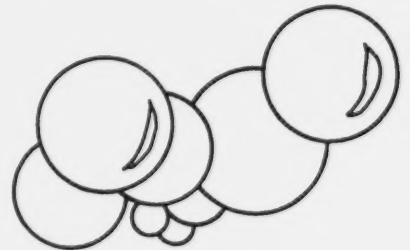
- 1 cup water
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon sugar
- 1 Tablespoon liquid detergent
- 1 Tablespoon glycerine (from drug store)

This is a good time to talk about such things as measuring, counting, and such concepts as half/whole and wet/dry, etc. with the more experienced child.

If you don't have the ingredients to make bubbles, small bottles of bubbles can be purchased inexpensively at any variety store. Bubbles in the bathtub, swimming pool or dishpan are loads of fun, too . . . just add bubble bath or liquid dish soap!

Things to do with bubbles:

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| pop | chase |
| catch | bat at |
| blow | follow with eyes |
| stamp with feet | reach for |



Ways to add to the fun:

Blow bubbles up, down, left or right . . . encourage the younger child to follow the bubbles with his/her eyes and then reach for or pop them; the more experienced child would enjoy chasing them or telling you where they are going or try to catch them.

Encourage your child to pop bubbles with different body parts (head, feet, knees, hands, elbow, etc.) Join in the fun and pop them, too!

Buy or make bubble pipes, wands, etc., for practice in blowing; encourage your child to make many or just a few bubbles, big or small ones . . . the older child may even try counting the bubbles before they pop.

These activities are expansions from page 7 of the parent booklet, An Invitation to Play.

Beads 'n Beans 'n Buttons 'n Bolts

Things to do:

sort	put in slots
count	make shakers
match	toss into containers
stack	make shapes out of them
hide them	string buttons/bolts
paste or glue them	button/unbutton
use as "play money"	fill and dump into containers

Ways to add to the fun:

Make different size slots in the plastic top of an empty coffee or shortening can . . . a big button will fit in the big slot, but not the little slot.

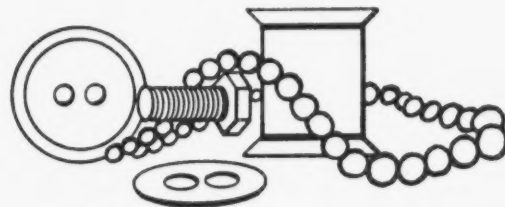
Fill empty containers (35mm container, empty Band-Aid boxes or Pringle's cans, for example) with beans and buttons to make shakers.

Use empty egg cartons for sorting buttons by color or size; or for sorting beans, beads, buttons and bolts.

Match bolts with same size nuts by screwing them together.

Things to talk about:

colors	positions (e.g., next to,
shapes (round/square)	under, above, in, out,
sizes (big/little)	behind, etc.)
how many	comparisons (same/different)



These activities are expansions from page 8 of the parent booklet, An Invitation to Play.

Throw-Aways or Play-Aways

Types of containers or "Throw Aways":

milk cartons	juice cans	toilet paper rolls
egg cartons	Pringle's cans	paper towel tubes
show boxes	cigar boxes	wrapping paper tubes
cereal boxes	coffee cans	
oatmeal boxes	match boxes	

Things to do:

stack	toss objects into
sort by size	trace around
look through	store things in
knock over	fill and dump
build things	make homemade instruments

Ways to add to the fun:

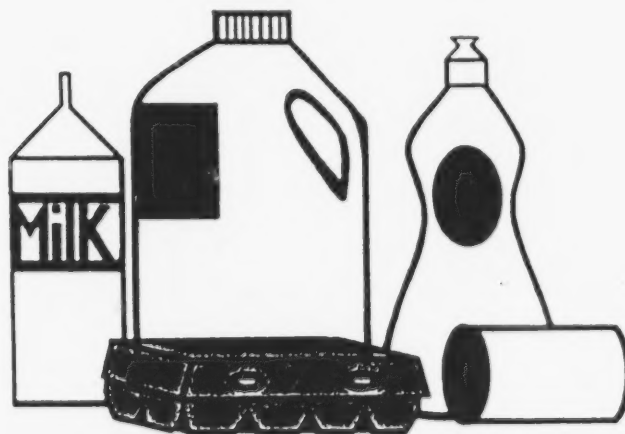
Paint, color, or decorate the containers.

Make musical instruments: put unpopped popcorn, beans or buttons in cans with covers to make shakers; use oatmeal cartons as "drums."

Use above mentioned tubes as telescopes.

Make a milk carton computer.

Play "store" with empty containers.



These activities are expansions from page 9 of the parent booklet, An Invitation to Play.

Pic' a Paint and Paint a Pic'

Materials to use:

finger paint	fingers, feet
tempera paint	sponges
watercolors	brushes
food	Q-Tips
water	vegetables
homemade "paints"	string and yarn
(see recipes on the following page)	

Ways to add to the fun:

Cut potatoes or other vegetables in half and carve stars, circles, etc. on them; dip into paint and stamp onto paper.

Add sawdust, sand or salt to commercial paint to give it a new texture and add to the sensory (feeling) experience of fingerpainting.

Cut up old sponges and use spring clothespins for handles.

Dip "gadgets" in paint and press onto paper, fabric or old window shades (gadgets might include potatoe masher, scrub brush, sink stopper, spools, etc.)

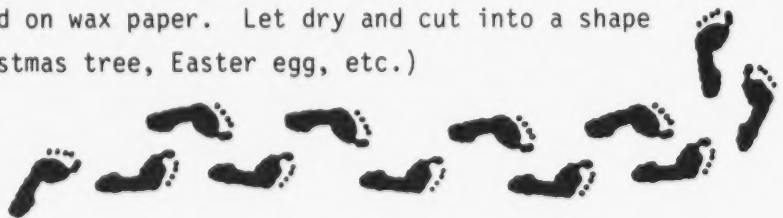
Use items from nature to paint with (e.g., evergreen branch, dandelion, sticks, and so forth).

Take a shallow box, place paper inside; dip marbles (or other small objects that roll) into paint and then drop them into the box. Have your child shake, rattle and roll the box to make a pretty picture.

Give your child a bucket of water and a paint brush to "paint" the house, wall, sidewalk, tree, wagon, etc.

A variation on fingerpainting: substitute pudding or shaving cream for fingerpaint.

Use liquid starch as a "magic potion" to paint over small pieces of tissue paper placed on wax paper. Let dry and cut into a shape (apple, leaf, Christmas tree, Easter egg, etc.)



These activities are expansions from page 10 of the parent booklet, An Invitation to Play.

Pic' a Paint and Paint a Pic', continued

Try blob painting: have your child fold a piece of construction paper in half and then open it; place a small "blob" of paint in the center and tell your child to close the paper and press. When opened again, a "blob design" will appear on the paper.

Give your child a piece of paper towel and several containers of food coloring; ask your child to fold the paper towel several times and dip each corner in the food coloring - open up the towel and let it dry.

Fill an old shoe polish "dabber" or deodorant roll bottle with paint.

Dip pieces of string in different colors of paint; place on paper, fold paper, press, reopen and remove strings.

Remember:

Allow enough time for the project AND clean up. Encourage your child to help in cleaning up.

Use oversized shirts and blouses (put on backwards) as paint smocks.

Encourage imagination and creativity.

It's messy but a LOT of fun!!



"Paint" Recipes

Salt and Flour Finger Paint

Stir 1 cup of flour and 1½ cups salt into ¾ cup water. Add coloring. The paint will have a grainy quality.

Cornstarch Finger Paint

Dissolve ½ cup of cornstarch in 4 cups of boiling water and stir. Let mixture come to boil again. Cooling causes paint to thicken slightly.

Starch and Soap Fingerprint

Moisten 1 cup laundry starch with 1 cup cold water; add 2 cups hot water and cook until thick. Remove from heat and add 1 cup soap flakes and a few drops of glycerine and coloring.

Paper Capers

Things to do with paper:

crumple	pile
crush	paint
tear	color
cut	paste together
fold	dip in water

Kinds of paper:

newspaper	paper bags
magazines	cardboard
catalogs	wallpaper scraps
wax paper	tissue paper
paper plates	old wrapping paper
old computer paper	old greeting cards



Ways to add to the fun:

Place several drops of oil paint in a pan of water and dip the paper in to make a "swirl" painting.

Make airplanes, puppets, kites, or seasonal decorations out of paper.

Make pictures using crayons, paint, markers, chalk, paste, glue, pens, pencils, and scissors.

Make collages.

Make books using pictures from magazines or catalogs; ask your child to tell you something about each picture.

Trace objects such as hands, feet, leaves, or other interesting items.

Fill a wading pool with crumpled paper balls to sit in, throw, feel, etc.

Make paper chains out of multi-colored strips of paper for decorating the house (and practicing color recognition).

*These activities are expansions from page 11 of the parent booklet, An Invitation to Play.

Paper Capers, continued

Make leaf rubbings; place leaves under a sheet of paper and rub a crayon back and forth to make an impression. (Peel the paper off of the crayon first)

Ask your child to find paper with pictures to look at (magazines, catalogs, books, etc.). Look at the pictures with your child, and talk about the colors, sizes, shapes, and names of the objects or people in the pictures.

Read story books to your child frequently; this will help your child develop language skills and pre-reading skills.

Stringing Along with Me

What to string:

beads	spools
macaroni	Life Savers
washers/nuts	hair rollers - middle removed
cheerios	paper clips
buttons	empty tape rolls
rings	empty paper tubes
curtain rings	bracelets
	rubber jar rings (canning jars)

ON

string	shoestring
yarn	straws
rope	dental floss
clothesline	pipe cleaners

Ways to add to the fun:

Dye macaroni with food coloring.

Sort three things to string (beads, buttons, spools) and then follow a pattern (e.g., 2 beads, 1 button, 1 spool and then repeat).

Count things as they string them.

Good time to talk about concepts like through, in, on, as well as few/many and long/short.

The more experienced child may like to use a plastic needle and yarn to string styrofoam cups, packing pieces, or meat trays.

Color My World

"Look, I drew you!"



Things to do:

- scribble
- color
- trace objects
- make designs
- make rubbings

Ways to add to the fun:

Have your child make an "art box" using an old container to store crayons, markers, pencils, paper, etc. Help your child decorate it.

Use a variety of papers such as:

sand paper	newspaper
butcher paper	white contact paper
wax paper	old computer paper
wall paper samples	construction paper

Have your child decorate an old window shade to hang in his or her room.

Place leaves under paper and use a crayon with the paper peeled off to rub over and make an impression.

Take crayon peelings and chips, place between two pieces of wax paper, place a piece of white paper over the wax paper, and then place a warm iron on top of that paper to melt the crayons and make a "stained glass" effect to hang in the window.

Things to talk about:

- colors
- up/down
- long lines/short lines
- shapes
- what the child is making

These activities are expansions from page 13 of the parent booklet, An Invitation to Play.

Feelies

"A child's way of learning is through doing. One way of doing is through the sense of touch."

Things to feel:

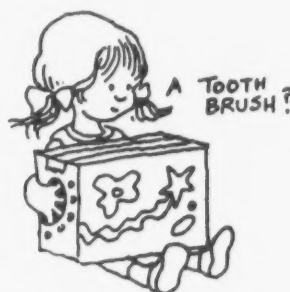
sand	leaves	grass
tin foil	wax paper	plastic wrap
Crisco	oil	pudding
toothpaste	shaving cream	water
make up	feathers	hand lotion
macaroni	egg shells	play-dough
balloons	sawdust	popcorn
sandpaper	fur	ice cubes
fabric swatches	carpet remnants	textured wall paper samples

What to do with them:

smear	pound on
walk through	match carpet remnants
roll in	rub on various parts of the body
sift	match fabric swatches (silk, corduroy
squeeze	burlap, etc.)

Talk about:

texture
size
temperature



Ways to add to the fun:

Make a "feelie" box:
Cut a hole in opposite sides
of a medium sized box and
fill it with different
objects. Place the box
on your child's lap . . .
ask him/her to reach inside
and name the objects!



Rock, Roll, 'n Romp

Sources of music:

radio	musical mobiles
records/stereo	music boxes
tapes/recorder	musical wind-up toys
instruments	musical stuffed toys
rattles	musical push/pull toys
people:	singing, clapping, tapping, humming, whistling

Props to use with music:

scarves (long and flowing)
streamers
flags
capes
hats and other dress ups
mirrors

Things to do with soft/slow music:

relax	massage	look at picture
listen	color pictures	dance with scarves
stretch	paint	and streamers
		cuddle a stuffed animal

Things to do to loud/fast music:

march	exercise
dance	jump
clap in rhythm	musical chairs
musical games	rock on rocking horse



These activities are expansions from page 15 of the parent booklet, An Invitation to Play.

Pat-a-Cake

Play dough is dough to play with.

Things to do with dough:

roll	squeeze
pat	pull apart
pound	cut out with cookie cutters
poke	create "snowmen," "snakes," and other animals

Things to use:

cups	plastic knives and forks
glasses	cookie cutters
rolling pins	toothpicks

Types of dough:

Commercial Play-dough

*Homemade: flour-salt dough

cooked dough

cornstarch dough

sawdust clay

cookie dough

*see recipes on the next page



These activities are expansions from page 16 of the parent booklet, An Invitation to Play.

Pat-a-Cake, continued

Flour-Salt Dough

2 cups flour

1 cup salt

(A small amount of liquid oil keeps dough from drying out.)

Use enough water to moisten flour and salt into a dough. To color it, add food coloring to water. Consistency is like cookie dough.

Cooked Dough

1 cup flour

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup cornstarch - blend with cold water

4 cups boiling water, add 1 cup salt

Pour hot mixture into cold. Put over hot water and cook until clear. Cool overnight. Knead flour in until right consistency. Coloring may be added with the flour. Keep in airtight container. If dough becomes hard, add more water as needed.

Cornstarch Dough

2 tablespoons cornstarch

4 tablespoons boiling water

4 tablespoons salt.

Mix cornstarch and salt. Add color if desired. Pour on boiling water, stir until soft and smooth. Place over fire until it forms soft ball. If material crumbles, add a little boiling water.

Fingers may be dusted with cornstarch if mixture sticks to hands.

Wrap in waxed paper.

Cornstarch-Salt Dough

1 cup salt

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup cornstarch

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup boiling water

Mix together and heat until thick. Mixture thickens quickly. Color may be added. If fragrance is desired, add oil of clove, cologne, etc.

Sawdust Clay

6 cups sawdust

$5\frac{1}{2}$ cups flour

2 tablespoons salt

Gradually add small amounts of boiling water. Blend thoroughly until mixture resembles stiff dough. Store in cool place in damp cloth, aluminum foil, etc. Keeps for about a week.

Splish Splashin' Away

Things to do in water:

splash	sit in
pour	run through
fill	feel
empty	blow bubbles
wade	explore
paint with water	add food coloring
wash objects . . .	or themselves
make foot and handprints	with wet feet and hands

Where:

bathtub	wading pool
sink	pail
dishpan	backyard with a
washtub	hose or sprinkler

Materials to provide to add to the fun:

cups	soap
items that float	funnel
spray bottles	straws
balls	bucket
sponges:	squeezing builds strength in fingers and hands

Things to talk about:

warm/cold	in/out
full/empty	clean/dirty



These activities are expansions from page 17 of the parent booklet, An Invitation to Play.

Sandscape

Sand is a sensory medium allowing your child to manipulate, explore, experiment, and relax.

Things to do with sand:

pour	measure	add to paint for a
sift	pat	"texture" painting
get wet	write in	
dig	bury things	
build	walk in	
rake		

Fill: cans, buckets, pie plates, trucks, cups, pots, shoes

With: shovels, spoons, measuring cups, pots, garden tools, and HANDS

Substitutes for sand for indoor use:

(Use dishpan or washtub to place these in)

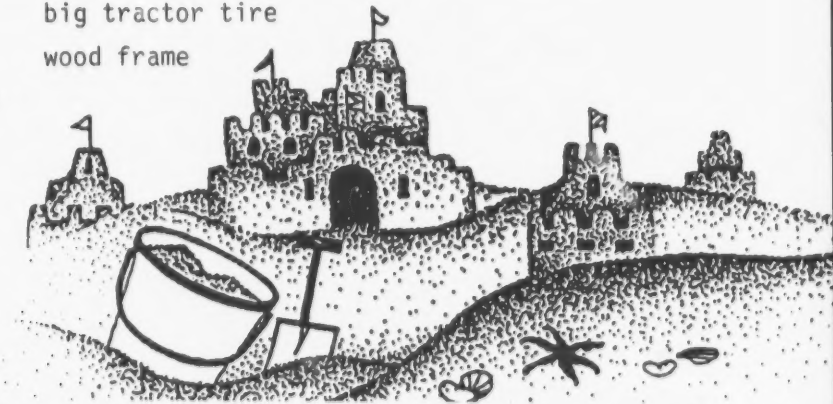
salt	soap flakes
oatmeal	sawdust
rice	cornmeal
styrofoam packing materials	

Things to talk about during sand play:

more/less	rough/smooth
full/empty	big/little
in/out	wet/dry
heavy/light	dirty/clean

How to make an outdoor sandbox:

old wagon	big tractor tire
old rowboat	wood frame
old wading pool	



These activities are expansions from page 18 of the parent booklet, An Invitation to Play.

Exploring the Great Outdoors

Where:

backyard	neighborhood sidewalks
park	vacant lot
woods	near a lake, river or pond
beach	farmland

What to look for:

grass	dirt	rain drops
trees	stones	snowflakes
leaves	bugs	small animals
bushes	butterflies	ear of corn
nests	pinecones	hay
bird eggs	seeds	acorns
apples	worms	branches
berries	weeds	flowers
sand	water	dandelions

Ways to add to the fun:

Look through a magnifying glass at the objects.

Collect a "bag full of nature," bring it home and place in a "feelie box." Encourage your child to identify the objects by touch.

Sort stones, leaves, and so forth by color or shape.

Press leaves between wax paper, place a piece of white paper over the wax paper and place a warm iron on top of the paper for several seconds. Hang the picture in the window to display.

Make a picture using pebbles, seeds, leaves, etc. Glue them onto a meat or vegetable tray or in a shallow box lid.

Chase butterflies or moths; talk about where they are (e.g., on the branch, in the tunnel, up in the air, down on the ground).

Put some popcorn by a gopher hole, peanut butter on a branch, crumbs on the picnic table . . . check back later to see if the food is gone.



These activities are expansions from page 19 of the parent booklet, An Invitation to Play.

Exploring the Great Outdoors, continued

Talk about the colors of objects; point out the differences and similarities; discuss sizes and shape of objects.

Feel the bark of the tree; have your child run his/her hand through the water of a pond or the sand on the beach; take your shoes off and walk through the grass or sand . . . talk about how these things feel.

Bring a bucket of water to the sandbox. Have your child pour the water in and build a sandcastle, road or whatever he/she chooses. Discuss such concepts as "wet" and "dry."

Watch a pan of snow melt.

Take seasonal walks:

In the fall look for squirrels; talk about the changing colors of the leaves; jump in a pile of leaves with your child; collect acorns; pick apples from the trees in an orchard - you may even want to make applesauce with them.

In the winter talk about the change in weather ("Is it hot or cold?," "How do we dress for winter weather?," etc.). Make a snowman; talk about the sound the snow makes as you walk through it; make "angels" in the snow by lying down on your back and spreading legs and arms in a "fanning motion"; look for icicles, bring one in and place it in a cake pan . . . watch it melt.

In spring, look for new buds on the branches and flowers in bloom; talk about the many colors seen on your walk; listen for birds chirping; look for caterpillars and butterflies; collect rainfall in a bucket; pick flowers.

In summer walk barefoot through the grass, sand, dirt or on sidewalk - talk about how it feels; drop stones into a pond and see if they sink or float; pick berries; discuss the change in weather and how we dress for hot weather . . . how do we cool off? Go for a swim in the lake or sit in a wading pool; running through the sprinkler is always fun . . . encourage your child to crawl through, jump over or walk around the spray of water . . . discuss the directional words.

These are just a few suggestions; the list is endless - just use your imagination.

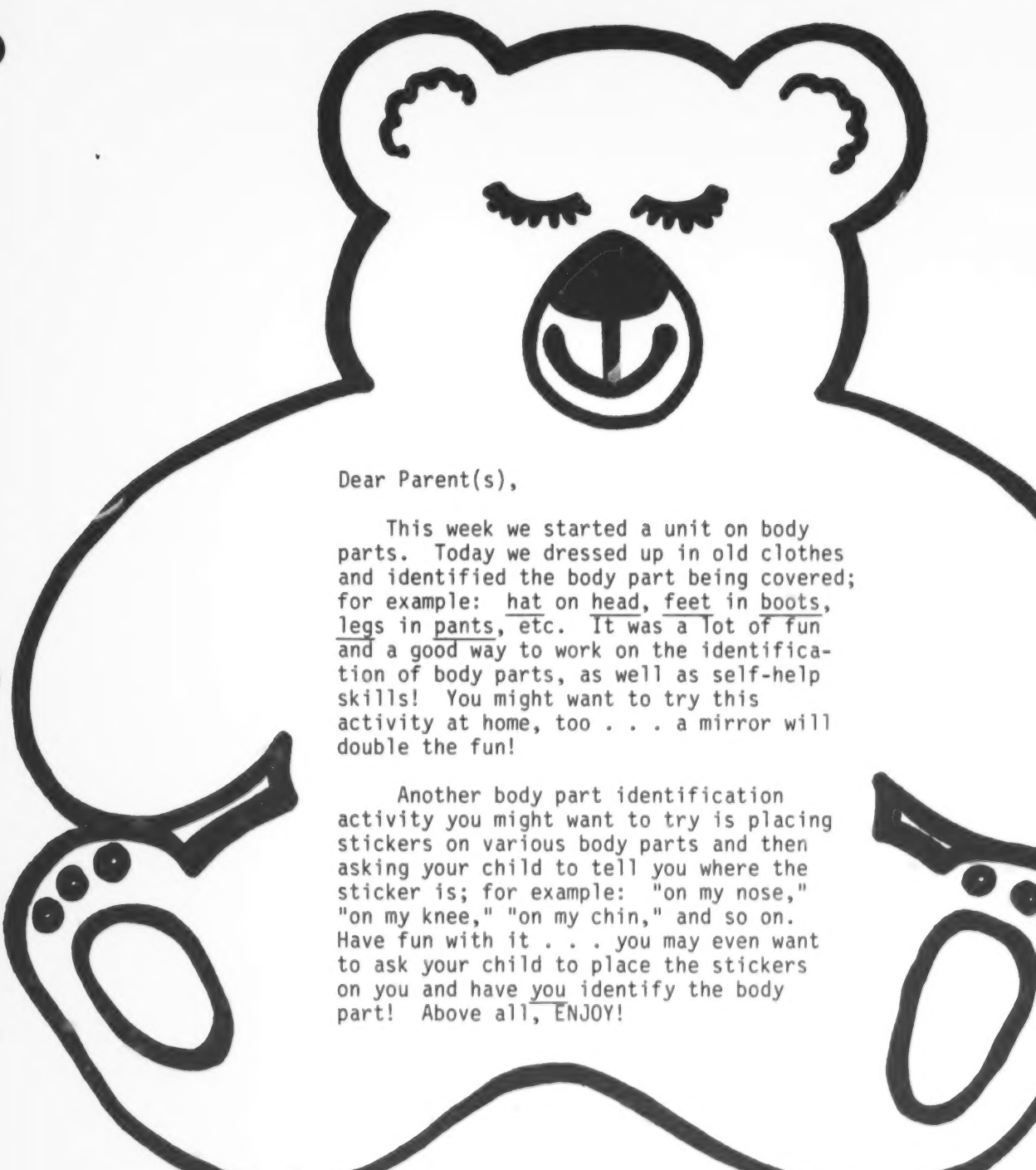
B. Newsletters

To maintain interest in the subject of play continue to emphasize it throughout the school year. This can be done by periodically sending parents a newsletter, "beary" good idea, or monthly calendar with suggested activities.

Samples are included in this section. Feel free to revise and adapt for your parents' needs.

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Sample Monthly Calendar	73
Sample Music Sheet	74
Help Your Child Make a Play Book	75

Sample Bear



Dear Parent(s),

This week we started a unit on body parts. Today we dressed up in old clothes and identified the body part being covered; for example: hat on head, feet in boots, legs in pants, etc. It was a lot of fun and a good way to work on the identification of body parts, as well as self-help skills! You might want to try this activity at home, too . . . a mirror will double the fun!

Another body part identification activity you might want to try is placing stickers on various body parts and then asking your child to tell you where the sticker is; for example: "on my nose," "on my knee," "on my chin," and so on. Have fun with it . . . you may even want to ask your child to place the stickers on you and have you identify the body part! Above all, ENJOY!

"Beary" Good Ideas

Send home a "beary" good idea each week to remind parents of activities to share with their child. The following is a short list to spark your imagination. On the next two pages you will find a sample newsletter and a bear to duplicate and write ideas on.

Go to the grocery store and ask for an assortment of empty boxes (big and small); bring them home and make them into a "neighborhood" by decorating them.

Bring out some old clothes including hats, vests, big shirts, and boots. Dress up with your child and talk about what body parts you cover when you put these things on. Provide a mirror to add to the fun.

Make a kitchen band with your child. For example, use pan lids for cymbals, an oatmeal box for a drum, and spoons for drum sticks.

Buy inexpensive blowing bubbles and have a ball! Encourage your child to pop bubbles with different body parts (head, feet, knees, hands, elbows, etc.)

Fill empty containers (35mm film container, empty Band-Aid boxes, or Pringle's cans, for example) with beans and buttons to make shakers.

Make a marble painting with your child. Take a shallow box, place paper inside, dip old marbles into paint, and then drop them into the box. Have your child shake, rattle and roll the box to make a pretty picture.

Give your child a bucket of water and a paint brush to "paint" the house, wall, sidewalk, tree, or wagon.

Make play-dough today. An easy recipe: 2 cups flour, 1 cup salt, a drop of oil, and enough water to moisten it to a cookie-dough consistency. To color it simply add food coloring.

Make a "feelie box": cut a hole in opposite sides of a medium sized box and fill it with different objects; place the box on your child's lap and encourage him or her to reach inside and name the objects.

Sample Monthly Calendar

SEPTEMBER

1986

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 Make your child a "tent." Place a blanket over a clothesline or table; add pillows and a few picture books.	2	3 Give your child a bucket of water and a paint brush to "paint" the sidewalk, house or a tree.	4	5 Blow bubbles outside. Have your child dip the wand in the bubbles and run against the wind so the bubbles "fly."	6
7 Fill empty cans (with lids) with old buttons, popcorn, or beans to make "shakers."	8	9 Make "finger paint." Stir 1 cup flour, 1½ cup salt into ¾ cup water. Add coloring.	10	11 Make leaf rubbings by placing leaves under paper and rubbing a crayon back and forth across the paper.	12	13 Put some quiet music on the radio or record player, and join your child in water play.
14	15 Make play-dough; 1 cup salt, 2 cups flour, and enough water to moisten.	16	17 Go for a nature walk. Have your child gather leaves, acorns, branches, stones, etc.	18	19 Go to an apple orchard. Pick apples with your child. Talk about their color, size, and taste.	20
21 Make applesauce with your child.	22	23 Play catch with your child. Encourage him or her to throw, roll, and kick the ball.	24	25 Bring out the crayons and paper, and color a few pictures with your child.	26	27 Use shaving cream in place of finger-paint on a table. Have your child practice circles and lines.
28	29 Help your child make a marble painting. Drop paint-dipped marbles into paper-filled box - shake, rattle and roll!	30				

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Sample Music Sheet

Dear Parent(s),

We've started our unit on transportation this week. Yesterday we made a "bus" out of boxes and sang The Bus Song. Below are the words.

The wheels on the bus go 'round and 'round,
'round and 'round, 'round and 'round,
(Rolling motion with hands)

The wheels on the bus go 'round and 'round,
all through the town.

(Additional verses)

Wipers on the bus go swish, swish, swish
(Hands move from side to side)

Headlights on the bus go blinkety, blink, blink
(Blink eyes)

Horn on the bus goes beep, beep, beep
(Pretend to beep imaginary horn)

Door on the bus goes open and shut
(Open and shut hands like a book)

Driver on the bus says "move on back"
(Motion backwards with hand)

Boys on the bus go bumpety, bump, bump
(Bounce up and down)

Girls on the bus go giggle, giggle, giggle
(Hand over mouth and giggle)



Help Your Child Make a Play Book

Dear Parent(s),

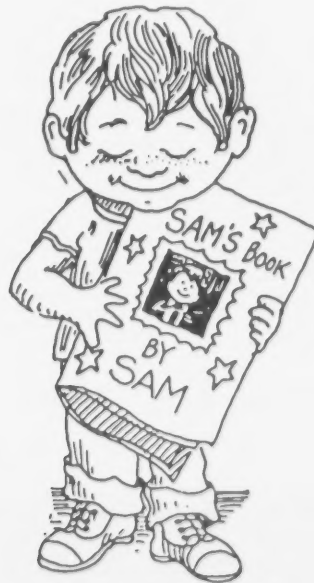
Since we've been emphasizing play and its importance this school year, why not make your child's very own play booklet? Here's how: Take pictures of your child playing; put the pictures in a photo album or spiral notebook--captions add to the fun! Encourage your child to tell you something about each picture; for example, why he or she likes doing that activity, what materials he or she uses, or simply comments made during the play activity. Help your child decorate the cover and write his or her name on the cover as illustrated.

This is a wonderful way to show your child you are interested in his or her play activities, and it's a special memento of his or her preschool years.

Perhaps next month each child could bring his or her very own play book to share with the class.

Have fun!

Your Child's Teacher



III.

Appendix



Appendix: Resources for Parents and Teachers

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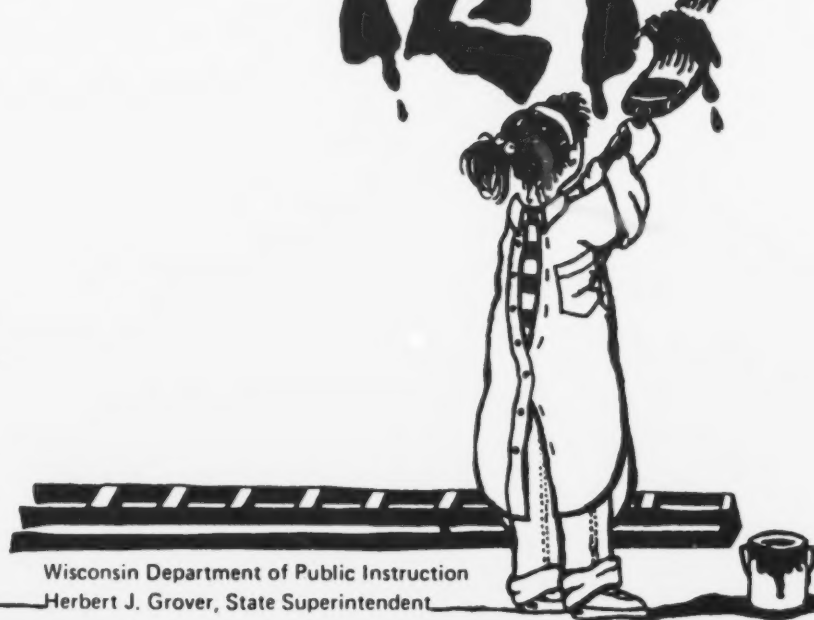
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AN INVITATION To PLAY

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An Invitation To Play

This is a booklet for parents of young children with exceptional educational needs. It was developed through a state implementation grant from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education.

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
Herbert J. Grover, Ph.D., State Superintendent

Victor J. Contrucci, Assistant Superintendent
Division for Handicapped Children and Pupil Services

WISCONSIN STATE EARLY CHILDHOOD: EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATION NEEDS PROJECT

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A special thanks to the following people for their fine contributions:

Layout and Design Jill Howman
Cover Jill Howman
Photography Neldine Nichols
Publications Jerry Jackson
Typesetting Mark Aulik

We also wish to thank the following people who participated in the product development workshops:
entitled: "Facilitating Positive Parent Child Interactions Through Play"

Nancy Amacher	Muriel Dimock	Carol Kiemel	Connie Olson
Kathleen Anderson	Debra Dorn	Cathleen Kuhtz	Jan Oncken
Mary Barbeau	Ann Dougherty	Maureen LaFleur	Marshall Poole
Teri Bartels	Pat Durst	Mary Luchterhand	Jane Reichart
Nancy Beilke	Candice Engelke	Sharon Ludwig	Paula Schmidt
Elizabeth Benning	Jean Hilliard	Pat Lyntwyn	Diane Sims
Linda Bolles	Jackie Hoffman	Debra Mallas	Kathy Sommers
Millie Bouche	Sara Holzman	Sue Marsden	Kim Stevens
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This booklet was produced in part with funds from the United States Office of Education (USOE), Bureau for Education of the Handicapped, Project Number 024CH3002, Grant Number G008300526, and funds from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Deaf-Blind VI-C funds.

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AN INVITATION TO PLAY



It is our hope these activities will encourage you to find the many ways to share the precious time you have with your child in these short and wonderful preschool years. Explore the many possibilities and have some fun along the way!

Who's Invited: Anyone who wants to share a moment and make some special memories.

When: Whenever you can make the time to set the stage or even join in the fun.

Where: Anyplace that allows you and your child the space to HAVE FUN!

COME PLAY WITH US!

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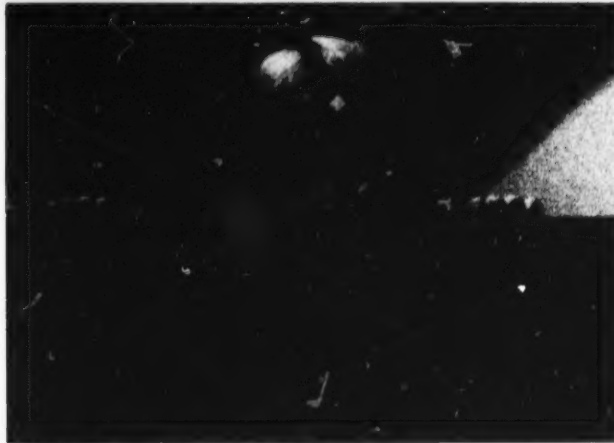
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Come on in...

Take a Peek...

You'll want to stay and play!



My Very Own Place

A blanket over a clothesline, an empty box, or a sheet over a table can provide a little "niche" where children can play on their own. It's fun to have a safe little place to be alone with a favorite toy or to go on a pretend camping trip.



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If you're lucky, you might be invited in. A guest who remembers to bring a snack for the owner of the hideaway will probably be welcomed with open arms.

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Make Believe With Boxes

Enter the world of make believe where a cardboard box can become a truck, a train, or a bus. With a few modifications, the box can be transformed into a tunnel, puppet stage or animal cage. Your child can push, pull, or build with cardboard boxes, both indoors and outdoors.

Remember to pick up a few boxes at the grocery store and let your child use his or her imagination. If you have enough boxes, each child can have his or her own private "house" and can decorate it as he or she wishes.



If a box is destined to become a television, help your child cut out a "picture tube" and supply some aluminum foil to make the antenna. Later, the box might become a spaceship, and your living room the planet Mars!





Dressing Up

STOP! Don't give all those closet rejects away. Set aside a few old clothes and pieces of jewelry that your child can use. Keep them in a special box or drawer that is easy to reach. At first, your child may just enjoy playing with a big hat in "peek-a-boo" fashion or trying on a string of beads. (A mirror will double the fun.)

A hat, a worn totebag, and an old vest can transform your child into a telephone repairperson, mail carrier, office clerk, or anyone else he or she wants to be. Provide a few props and encourage your child to enter the world of make believe.





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Kitchen Play

Hear the kettles banging? Smell the cheese sauce? Feel the heat from the steaming macaroni?

The kitchen is a great place to learn about the five senses. There are inexpensive playthings in every cupboard: a wooden spoon, a plastic bowl, and a set of measuring cups are great fun for your child. Keep a box of those unbreakable items in the corner or under a table for his or her private collection.

Let your child help by filling, emptying, stirring, shaking, and of course, tasting the final product. Then, do simple clean up jobs together such as wrapping up leftovers in aluminum foil. Remember to save the empty containers for your child's "stash" of kitchen tools.



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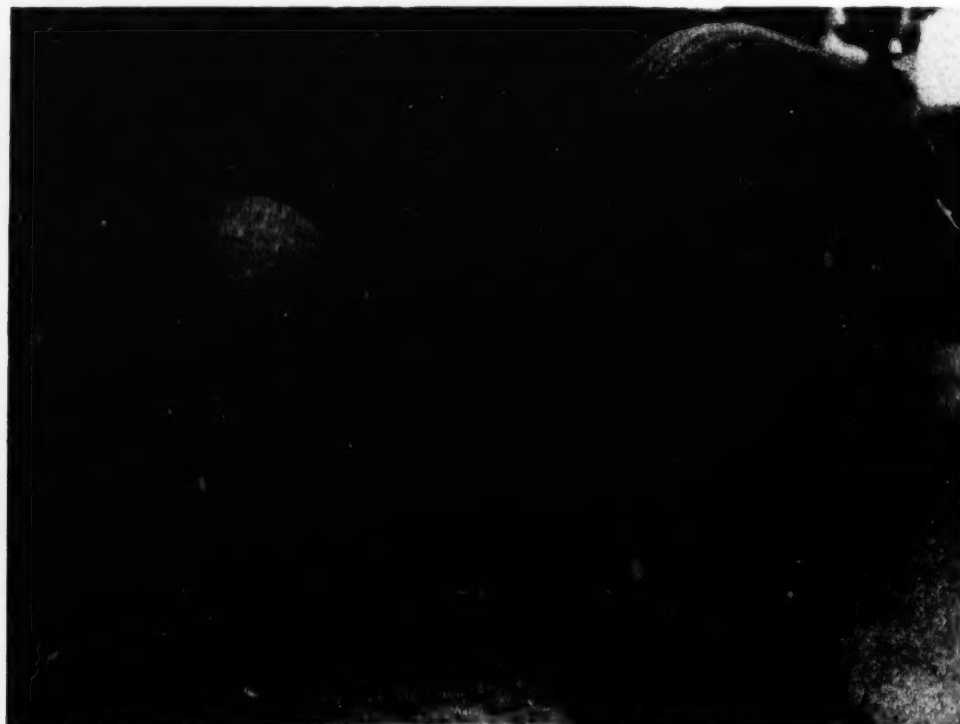


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Round N' Round It Goes

Give your child different kinds of balls. Watch how he or she reaches, grasps, bats, throws, rolls, bounces, and even kicks them through the air. You can change ball play by providing a board for a slope, a container for a basket, or an empty milk carton for a target. The interesting thing about this toy is that, just like your child, it never stays where you leave it!





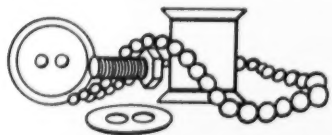
Bubblin' Bubbles

POP! Liquid dish soap and a little water can provide hours of enjoyment for your child. Bubbles are fun to chase and catch with hands . . . or pop with feet!

Blow them high up to the sky or down to the ground. Blow big or little bubbles, many or just a few! Talk about size, shape, and direction.

On a windy day, watch them fly away . . . or try to catch them!

Beans N' Beads N' Buttons N' Bolts



Picking up beans, stacking checkers, sorting and matching beads or twisting a nut on a bolt are all great activities to help children develop control over their fingers.



Also, try playing simple games with these items like "button-toss," "find one like mine," or "hide the penny." Let children experiment, but be sure to stay close by in case a button finds its way into your child's mouth ... and turns into a "belly button."

Throw-Aways Or Play-Aways

Save egg cartons - they're great for sorting; wipe out coffee cans - they make great drums or banks; and don't throw out paper towel tubes - they're really a telescope in need of a pirate.

Many of the food items and paper products you purchase come in small packages and containers that children can use for play. They can stack, sort, store, fill, and empty these items to their hearts' delight. Since they are throw-aways, no one cares if they get played-away instead.



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Salt and Flour Fingerpaint

1 cup flour
1½ cup salt
1 cup cold water

1 drop liquid dish soap
Food coloring or powdered paint
Wintergreen (a few drops)

Stir flour and salt into water, add soap and food coloring or powdered paint. A few drops of wintergreen will take away the flour smell. The "paint" will have a grainy texture.

Pic' A Paint And Paint A Pic'

Giving your child a bucket of water and a brush to "paint" the sidewalk is a great way to introduce the joy of painting.

Many toddlers enjoy the tactile (or feeling) experience of fingerpainting with a homemade mixture. Another fun activity is to lay paper in a shallow box and place paint dipped marbles in the box ... then shake, rattle, and roll!

When your child is ready to use commercial paints, watercolors and tempera paints are available in most variety stores. While famous artists may have been restricted to the brush, you can try strings, sponges, leaves, and even FEET!

Paper Capers

Save junk mail, old magazines, wrapping paper, and other discarded paper products for your child to pile, sort, fold, and carry to every corner of the house in search of a "mailbox."

Your toddler may also enjoy crinkling, crumbling, crushing, and cramming scrap paper into various sized boxes and containers.

Find a special place to store old magazines so you can sit down with your child to turn the pages together look at the pictures and name objects. Cut out favorite pictures together and paste them in a special scrapbook. To encourage language, ask your child to tell you something about each picture and then write it down next to the picture.



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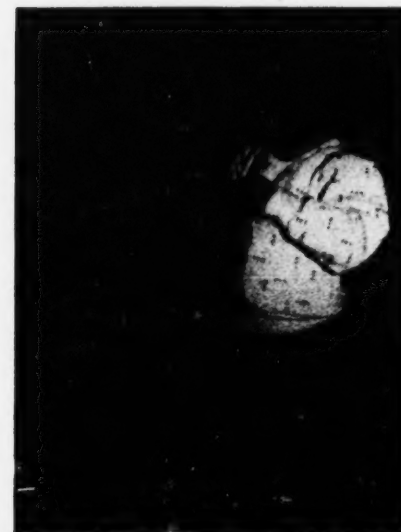
Stringing Along With Me

A bead is not the only thing a child can string. Old curlers, empty spools, washers, buttons, macaroni and curtain rings are great for stringing.

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You can pierce a hole in an object, and with styrofoam cups, it has the potential for stringing. Beginners may want to use pipe cleaners or straw while the more experienced child may try shoe strings or yarn.

Gather a bag of "things with holes" and help your child make a necklace, belt, anklet, or a mobile for his or her room. Youngsters feel great when they can make something to wear or share!



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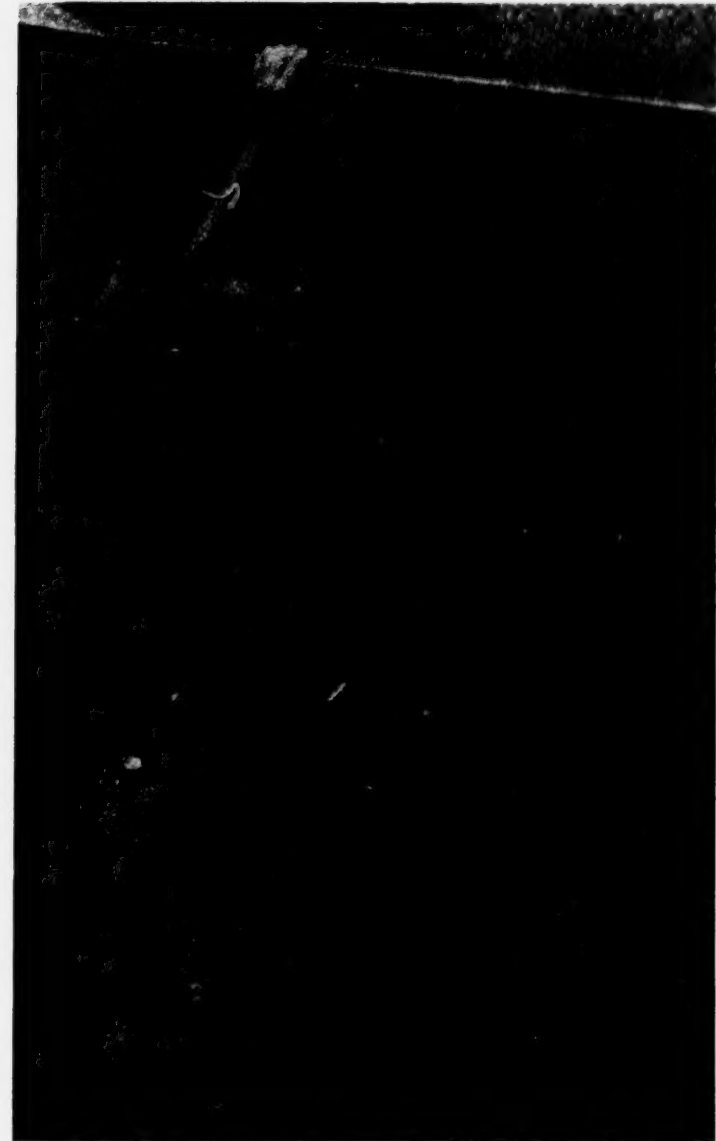
Color My World

Spontaneous scribbling, marking, and making random forms and designs are important steps in your child's development. Encourage this wonderful form of self-expression by providing crayons or markers and lots of paper.

A child creates a great deal of art work before drawings look like houses, people, or other familiar objects. Remember art does not have to be recognized as anything specific to be art ... it's the process, not the product that's important.

After a great deal of experimentation, your child may combine the shapes and lines to make what adults may recognize as a person.

"Look, I drew you!"

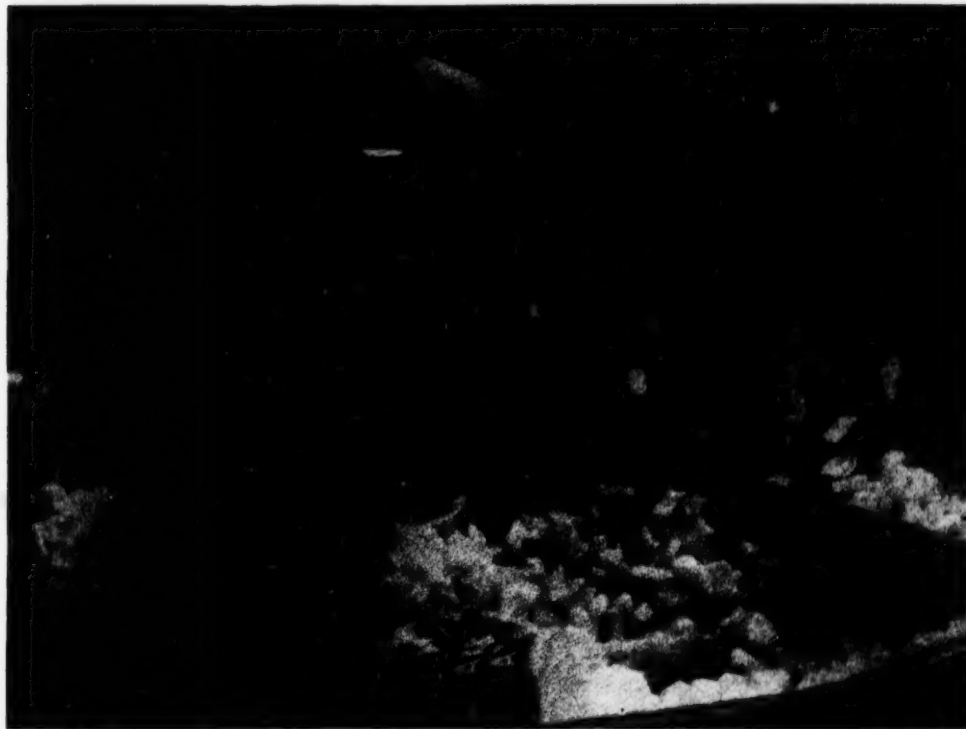


Feelies

Your child can learn a great deal about texture and form by handling a variety of materials.

Through their sense of touch, children learn to determine if an object is hard or soft, smooth or rough, or heavy or light. Ask your child if he or she likes feeling it. Soft and furry feathers, squishy mud, and bumpy corn all generate different responses.

Can your child identify objects just by feeling them? Put a blindfold on your child and ask him or her to guess what the object is. Or, make a feelie box. Cut a hole in opposite sides of a medium-sized box and fill it with different objects. Place the box in front of your youngster so that he or she can reach but not see into it. Ask your child to feel and name the objects in the box ... then lift the box and see how many were identified!



Walking barefoot in the grass, crushing egg shells, rubbing hand lotion, or smearing vegetable shortening in a cake pan are other sensory experiences that give your child more information about the world.



Rock, Roll, N' Romp

Many children first learn about music by hearing their mother's voice humming a lullaby or daddy singing the latest pop tune as they're rocked to sleep. The melodic tunes you sing about eyes, ears, toes, and fingers help your toddler begin identifying body parts. Other fingerplays and musical games like "London Bridges" and "Ring 'Round the Rosie" not only teach a variety of concepts but they're fun to act out with other people.



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If your little one is in the mood to form a band, you can invent instruments with lots of things from the kitchen. A coffee can or oatmeal box makes a great drum and pie tins become loud cymbals. So, turn on the radio, wind up the music box, or put on a record and encourage your child to clap, sway, or even dance to the rhythm. Enjoy!



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Uncooked Play Dough

2 cups flour (sifted)	1½ tablespoons cooking oil
½ cup salt	(add last)
½ cup water	Food coloring (optional)

Mix and knead all the ingredients together adding a bit more water if needed. Put in an air tight container and keep in refrigerator.

Pat-A-Cake

"Play dough" is dough to play with ... poke, pound, push and pull on. Encourage your child to use his or her hands to squeeze and let go. Show your toddler how to roll dough into different forms to create something special. Rolling pins, cookie cutters, pans, and other equipment from the kitchen items allow your child to pretend to bake just like mom or dad.





Splish-Splashin' Away

Summer days provide a great opportunity for you and your child to wade, splash, and cool off in a pool or at the beach. When that's not possible, the bathtub, a dishpan of water, or even the kitchen sink gives your child a place to pour, stir, dunk, float, fill, and measure ... or just get wet!

Plastic cups, bottles, funnels, sponges and other items that float are just a few things children enjoy playing with in the water. And you can always throw in a bar of soap for some good clean fun!



Sandscape

The wonderful thing about sand is what it can become. When dry, sand pours and sifts like flour, but after a rainfall it can be packed and shaped into a sandcastle.

Even very young children enjoy grabbing handfuls of sand and watching it slip through their fingers. Give your child a variety of utensils to play with in the sand and watch him or her make pies and cakes and other "sandy delicacies."

The sandbox is also a great place to make roads, mountains, and tunnels, or to dig for buried treasures. Hide something in the sand and encourage your child to search for and identify the object.

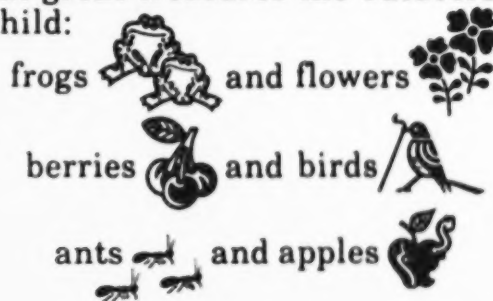




As you walk through a backyard, a vacant lot, or park talk to your child about what he or she sees and hears. Take time to feel the rough bark of a tree or smell the aroma of a flower. Ask questions that require more than a yes or no answer. All this will help your child pay more attention to the wonders of nature. Take a sack lunch along and, after the picnic, use the empty sack to gather seeds, leaves, and other items that can be taken home and pasted on a piece of cardboard or heavy paper.

Exploring The Great Outdoors

Oh, what great treasures the outdoors holds
for your child:



The list is endless!



Setting The Stage For Play

YOUR CHILD

- Consider how your child is feeling when you suggest a play idea. If your child is excited, you may want to choose a quiet activity, such as coloring, puzzle play or sand play; if he or she is bored, you may want to chase bubbles or dress-up in old clothes.
- Keep in mind that when a child is not feeling well, he or she may want to return to the earlier stages of play or simply crawl into your lap and look at a book with you.
- Encourage your child's efforts rather than judge them; it's the "doing" that's most important to a child--not the finished product.
- Praise your child for trying, experimenting, and using imagination in play. (i.e., "You're such a clever boy" or "I'm so proud of you for trying")
- Encourage growth and variety. If your child seems to choose the same activity because it's successful and "safe," introduce new materials and activities that will also prove to be successful and expand on them.

PLAY AREA

- Provide enough space to do the activity and make sure the space is available for the length of time needed.
- Keep materials/toys in the same place so your child can find them. Vary the materials from time to time.
- Make sure the area is safe (no sharp corners to fall on), and where an adult can keep an eye on the activities.

PLAY MATERIALS

- Consider your child's interests and skill levels when selecting toys and materials. Let your child be a part of the selection process.

PLAY MATERIALS (Continued)

- Consider materials that can be used for more than one skill (i.e. colored blocks for the older child--for stacking, counting, and color recognition).
- Be sure the materials are safe and durable (no sharp edges, not small enough to swallow, and not easily broken).

TIME

- Provide adequate time to spend on an activity; allowing for set up, activity itself, and clean up.
- You may want to schedule a specific time each day or each week for "special play."

CLEAN UP

- Alert your child that playtime is almost over so he/she can finish the activity (i.e. "We'll be picking up soon, so finish what you're doing.").
- Praise your child for helping to put his/her toys away.
- Encourage your child to help clean the table after painting or fold the clothes after dress-up and put them away.
- If your child decides he/she is not ready to clean up, gently encourage your child and **KEEP CALM**. Giving your child a choice while cleaning up gives them the impression they are in control. Try this tactic: "Do you want to put the hat or the shoes away? Do you want to put the red beads or the green beads in the box first?"

ABOVE ALL HAVE FUN!